

A MORE MODERN TURKEY?: THE POLITICAL USE OF MODERNITY IN TURKISH DOMESTIC POLITICS

BY

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Abstract

In 1923, Kemal Atatürk began his modernization project that was to bring Turkey to the ranks of “civilized nations.” In doing so, he utilized modernity as a political tool, a method that would be adapted by other domestic actors in a similar fashion. This thesis argues that as a result of this legacy, there has been no true political project based on modernization or democratization in Turkey. Modernity, when used as a political tool, rather than an end in itself, cannot be delivered. In this case, the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Atatürk’s Kemalism are similar to each other, in that their plans for modernity fell short because they became distracted by their own limitations. Understanding domestic politics in this light, the EU worsens the domestic situation of modernity; it can be counterproductive, furthering societal divides and therefore also failing to deliver modernity. This argument is made through the historical examination of modernity through Kemalism, how that concept and legacy has effected the AKP and their use of modernity as a political tool, and in conjunction with those two parties, how the EU affects Turkish domestic politics.

Kemalism’s lasting concept of modernity is a loaded notion and influences all other conceptions of modernity discussed in Turkey. Currently the debate exists between Kemalists, the AKP, and even the EU where each group claims to represent the path to a more modern Turkey. Through the utilization of modernity, they have found the perfect tool for political gain and influence.

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Introduction

Modern Turkey. Rarely is one country so permanently branded with such a loaded descriptor that is used not as much for clarification, but as a component of identity. Yet, the idea of a “Modern Turkey” immediately draws attention to its vast anomalies. It draws a distinct line between what Turkey is and is not; separate from the “unmodern” Ottoman Empire before it, yet still connected to its meaningful history; distinct from the traditional societies of the Middle East, but still not an accepted member of the Europe club. The list could continue. Though, if Turkey is truly a modern country, why must its discussion be prefaced with a descriptor that should be inherently understood?

The answer of the anomalous modern Turkey lies in its founding and ongoing, yet still incomplete modernization efforts coupled with the shifting meanings of what modernity entails. With the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a massive modernization project was begun. The idea that Turkey could be transformed from a disgraced Ottoman remnant on the wrong side of the Great War into a fully modern nation of Turks was Atatürk’s greatest dream. This dream set the stage for Turkey’s great modernization debate, a dispute that is livelier today than ever. It is a conversation that occurs not only within Turkey, but is also disputed internationally by social and political organizations who hope to have a stake in Turkey’s future, or at least utilize its long-term stability and continue to encourage its democratization efforts.

The parties fueling the ongoing topic of Turkey’s modernity represent three camps of influence within Turkey’s domestic political scene. Each group uses modernity as a political tool, invoked to persuade, direct, and control Turkey’s political direction. And while such attempts at directing the political course is not uncommon in any state, the conflict for influence in Turkey is different. Turkey is currently a nation at a crossroads. It is at the doorstep of Europe, accepted as a close neighbor, but not yet allowed to enter Europe’s great club, the European Union (EU). This place in limbo has been

exacerbated between two distinct camps competing for influence internally, leading to mixed messages on whether EU membership is right for Turkey as well as how far Turkey is willing to go to be accepted.

The current governing party, the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, has been in power at this point for over a decade, since its massive electoral victory in 2002. The past 12 years has illustrated a distinct split in the conversation and identity of modernity in Turkey. However, while the AKP has introduced a new and popular political option, those representing the Kemalist line of thought have continued to fight to maintain its own vision of the true path of Turkey. As it was in the beginning, the hope of a modern Turkey drives the political conversation. The conflict between the AKP and Kemalists is heightened by the presence of an outside third party, the EU. Each group has a different vision for Turkey, leading to tense political conflicts and leaving the visions of Turkey's future as a modern nation in limbo.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The use of modernity as a political tool is not a new concept in Turkey. Atatürk's project of modernization was first and foremost a political tool. A tool necessary to create total and lasting change that would lead Turkey to the status of a modern, Western state. Yet this concept of modernity is a laden idea. It doesn't maintain just one definition, and in the context of Turkey, different parties have different ideas and meanings of this one word. Yet each can use the word to advantage their own agendas, and also to the detriment another party by utilizing one or more meanings of the word.

Because of this interpretation and use and modernity, there has been no true political project based on modernization or democratization in Turkey. When used as a political tool, rather than an end in itself, modernity cannot be delivered. In this case, the AKP and Kemalism are similar to each other, in that their plans for modernity fell short because they struggled to overcome modernity's political limitations. Full modernity and full democracy cannot ensure political power, and so the quest for

modernity is really a quest to gain and maintain control, and cannot actually deliver. Understanding domestic politics in this light, the presence of the EU worsens the situation; it can be counterproductive, furthering societal divides and therefore also failing to deliver modernity.

To begin, the oldest and most engrained concept of modernity begins with Atatürk. Atatürk's vision for the Turkish nation was very specific, and for several years pushed forward many different progressive projects based on joining Turkey to the ranks of "Civilized Nations" (Glyptis, "Rapprochement" 411). Atatürk's plan for the future was officially expressed in the Six Arrows of Kemalism at a conference of his political party, the Republican People's Party (CHP) in 1931. Fortifying the nation for decades to come would be the belief in Secularism, Republicanism, Nationalism and the Protection of the Revolutionary Reforms. Though the principles of Populism and Statism are no longer considered essential, their neglect can be seen as a consequence of Turkey's growth and an updated vision of what the state apparatus can truly control.

And while Kemalist theory is still represented by a political party and the military establishment, its presence, representation, and most importantly belief goes much deeper. Iconic pictures of Atatürk are everywhere: in shops, restaurants, homes and offices. The celebration of Kemalism has been presented in a way that is comparable to a religion by some, pointing out the similarities in the way in which Atatürk is thought of and remembered. In exploring modern critics of Kemalism, Karaveli examines the relationship between religion and Kemalism and discusses how journalist Etyen Mahçupyan sees "that Kemalism has become a full-fledged religion, replete with its prophet, sacred texts, shrine, and appurtenant rituals" (94). Due to the very nature of Kemalism, a deep-seated political theory and way of thinking and feeling about the nation, the followers of Kemalism, or Kemalists, as they will be referred to for the purpose of this research paper, are a difficult group to clearly identify.

The Turkish domestic political party that identifies as Kemalist is the Republican People's Party (CHP), just as it was at the Republic's founding. However, as previously stated, Kemalism is more than just a political party or theory, its meaning permeates more than one's partisan affiliation. Atatürk initially ensured a complete separation of the military and politics, banning all serving military members or those attending military schools from being able to maintain a position in parliament or even vote in elections (Lerner and Robinson 20). Set forth in the 1923 Constitution, these same laws apply today. Nevertheless, as it was Atatürk's position as a military commander that allowed him to rise to power, the Turkish military always maintained an important position in society. And though Atatürk made clear that the "civilianization" was essential to Turkey's path as a modern nation, the biggest defender of Kemalism is no doubt the Turkish military (Lerner and Robinson 20).

The Turkish military sees itself as the guardian of the Republic. Turkey was purposefully created and designed by Atatürk so that it would become a truly modern nation on par with the West. Atatürk did not believe that Turkey would achieve greatness without guidance, and so the military, while apolitical, performed essential societal duties. This allowed the Turkish military to be a respected and revered institution, which is essential in understanding its current role as the modern protectors of Kemalism. Atatürk's image, in uniform, appears on the masthead of the Army's website. Turkey's military schools educate incoming officers in a strict manner, ensuring that the principles of Kemalism will continue to be upheld, cementing the Turkish military as guardians of the Turkish Republic (Ersel).

And while the military's role in the new Republic was designed by Atatürk to remain separate from politics, it is important to note that this does not mean that the military has adhered to this restriction. The military has chosen to directly involve itself in politics several times through Turkey's history since the first military coup in 1960. And though the military has always returned power to new democratically elected governments, its decision to intervene is important in understanding

contemporary interpretations of Kemalism that play a role in how the discussion of modernity is perceived domestically.

The role of Kemalism as the backbone of Turkish society has never before been questioned as strongly as it is today. Plans of Westernizing and looking towards Europe culminated in hopes for joining the EU; a step that could be seen as the pinnacle of Turkey's status of a modern nation. However, just when Turkey's EU journey began to appear as a possibility, it seemed that this dream might not be so sweet. Joining the EU requires sacrifice and change that targets the very heart of Kemalism, what Glyptis has even called a "Clash of Systemic Values." To cloud the situation further, the rise of a new political party, the AKP, has added a new prospect for Turkey's future. Each group claims to represent the path to a more *modern* Turkey ("Rapprochement"). Through the utilization of modernity, Kemalists, the EU, and the AKP have found the perfect tool for political gain and influence, and its use and direction must be analyzed to understand where Turkey's future may lay.

The concept of modernity is, even at its simplest, is difficult to articulate. While there have been scholars who have attempted to define modernity "in terms of a finite and distinct set of pattern variables," I feel that this type of definition fails to take into account the fluidity and subjective nature of modernity (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 19). Even in the West, where the foundation for modernization was formed and is therefore still used as the model against which those who have not yet achieved status as a "modern" nation are judged, there are more criteria than simply measurable economic factors. Various aspects of social life are also widely considered in the question of what modernity looks like, but those cannot always be measured as clearly as economic data (though there are helpful statistical indicators for ways of evaluating "modern" social conditions.)

Within the context of this essay, there is no single definition of modernity. It is the nature of Turkish modernity that allows this type of open exploration. Turkey's base of modernity comes directly

from Kemalism, but more importantly, the implications of Turkey's historical Kemalist legacy influences more recent notions of modernity as advocated by the AKP, and provides an explanation for the difficulties in negotiations surrounding certain domestic issues between Turkey and the EU. I will be examining Turkish modernity as a political conception, recognizing that is deeply entwined with Turkish national and even personal identity. This analysis allows identity to be a component of modernity, but within the context of domestic politics, the conversation around modernity is just as if not more important than identity. In searching for political power, the goal is not always to talk about who we are, but to utilize modernity as a tool to guide where we are going, which I believe is a much more powerful political conception.

I will be examining the different utilizations and interpretations of modernity by Kemalists, the EU, and the AKP. Understanding how this political tool is employed by each actor is important in measuring where Turkey's current political preferences rest, and more importantly, where they may likely be headed. The present contested visions of modernity in Turkey are not subtle or minor concerns. There is currently a very serious unease domestically about Turkey's future; and when adding the EU question into the mix, the stakes are quite high. Understanding if Turkey's modern future truly looks West, or if it will forever remain a simple bridge between East and West is an important question to all parties involved, and merits appropriate consideration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The discussion of Turkish modernity has been alive and well since the establishment of the Republic. Atatürk's modernization project and general overhaul of Turkish culture, society, and government did not escape attention. It was clear from the beginning that Atatürk's ideas were meant to propel Turkey forward for the sake of creating and strengthening a great nation, as opposed to personal gain. This has led to the notion of Turkish modernity to be debated and analyzed many times

over, yet the debate is still relevant and important due to the changes within the past two decades that have seemingly permanently altered the recent Turkish modernity debate.

To understand the challenges that Turkey has been facing in the modernity debates, it is essential to understand the basis of Turkey's modernity status quo. The original concept of modernity can be found in Kemalism; the original, and usually radical, changes that Atatürk set out to transform Turkey with. From before the time that the Republic of Turkey had been proclaimed, Atatürk publicly declared he was creating "a new state" (Ahmad 52). And this idea of a completely new state he was very serious about, working hard to ensure he would win the power struggle after the abolition of the Sultanate. Atatürk's mission was to ensure that Turkey be wholly separated from the Ottoman Islamic state, the very idea of which Ahmad declares "anathema to Mustafa Kemal and his supporters." Any further continuation of the old way would only "maintain the status quo and perpetuate the backwardness of Turkey" (53). It was removing this "backwardness" and paving the way to an entirely new future that Kemalist modernity was truly about.

When Atatürk began formulating his vision for the new Republic, he was planning around "a population that was 90 per cent Muslim, but ethnically mixed, impoverished and numerically decimated" (Zürcher 136). However, through population exchanges and other migrations, the demographics of what would become his new Turkey was still shifting rapidly. At the beginning of this new Republic, proclaimed on October 29, 1923, Turkey was now a state with an astonishing 98 percent Muslim population facing a perplexing shift to an overall greater proportion of rural inhabitants. With the large Christian and ethnically diverse urbanized populations who had been largely in control of the modern economy gone from Turkey, Atatürk's modernization plan was starting from an enormously challenging position (140).

Atatürk's first objective was to separate the Republic of Turkey from its Ottoman roots. This involved not only creating a new government structure, but also a new social order. As Zürcher saw it, Atatürk's mission was essentially to change the mentality of Turks, "who had thought of themselves as Muslim subjects of an Islamic empire," to simply that of 'Turks' (141). This was much more than a simple "modernization project," as one might think of in today's more general terms (usually involving a change to market economies and democracy). Kemalism's conception of modernity required the identity change of an entire population.

Though Kemalism was a massive project, its aims can be broken down into two basic goals. Zürcher characterizes the first goal as "To turn this mass of people [Turks] into a nation, to make citizens out of subjects and to install a sense of patriotism" (136). Kemalism's deep roots in Turkish society can be attributed to its role in the creation of the Turkish Republic. Nationalism and a strong belief in the unity, strength, and purpose of Turks was the foundation on which Atatürk could build his modernization project. The second goal of Kemalism concerns how Atatürk wished to shape the Turks of his new nation. Kemalism's purpose "was to make society 'modern' (musair) and 'civilized' (medeni). Both of these terms, which at times, were used as synonyms, referred to contemporary European civilization" (Zürcher 136). So the hopes of Turkish modernity are intertwined with the identity that Kemalism hoped to adopt: a purely European identity. Kemalism was an ideological transformation towards Western standards where Europe was the ideal.

Further proof of the relationship between Kemalism, modernity, and Westernization is provided by Bozdoğan and Kasaba: "Turkish modernizers had readily identified modernization with Westernization – with taking a place in the civilization of Europe." They continue more explicitly that for Kemalists, "Modernity, in their conception, was a total project: one of embracing and internalizing all the culture dimensions that made Europe modern" (37). The creation of a nation of Turks and the goal

of becoming European were the ideological grounds for the societal reforms that Atatürk would soon implement.

Atatürk's reforms were quite extensive and had momentous impacts on daily life in Turkey. Some examples of Kemalist changes were the switch to following European time, the new requirement of European dress, and even the change from Ottoman script to the Latin alphabet (Zürcher 144). In response to some societal discontent concerning the requirement of wearing of hats as opposed to the traditional fez, Atatürk proclaimed:

“it was necessary to abolish the fez, which sat on our heads as a sign of ignorance, of fanaticism, of hatred to progress and civilisation, and to adopt in its place the hat, the customary head-dress of the whole civilised world, thus showing, among other things, that no difference existed in the manner of thought between the Turkish nation and the whole family of civilised mankind.” (Kemal 721-722)

Atatürk wanted to make clear that a civilized, modern nation was not compatible with traditional Ottoman ways of life. Reforms were necessary to set Turkey on the correct path to progress, putting it amongst “civilized mankind,” meaning Europe.

And while Kemalism involved many reforms, the change that best illustrates Atatürk's ambition of making Turkey more like Europe was his belief in strict secularism, which is certainly the greatest lasting ideological component of modern Kemalism. This secularization movement began with the replacement of sharia rule with a Western civil code, essentially removing the basis of religious morals from the functioning of society (Zürcher 136). Affirming his commitment to secular beliefs, Atatürk once stated in an interview that “He is a weak ruler who needs religion to uphold his government...My people are going to learn the principles of democracy, the dictates of truth and the teachings of science” (Mango 463). And though secularization might imply that the state would step back from having any part in religious components of society, Turkey's initial secularization ideas actually led to the state having greater influence over religion (Zürcher 279). By moving education and law to the command of

the state away from the Islamic influence that was previously responsible for those essential parts of society, Atatürk hoped to remove Islam's grip from the Turkish republic.

The debate between secularization and the role of Islam is a huge component of the modernity debate in current Turkish politics. Emad Bazzi explores how Atatürk believed in the importance of secularization concerning not only separation from the state and Islamic institutions, "but the liberation of the individual mind from the traditional Islamic concepts and practices" (105). Only the achievement of pure Kemalist secularization would merit Turkish modernity. This idea is crucially relevant today as Turkey's ruling power for over a decade, the AKP, rejects this notion of secularization.

Bazzi presents an important explanation for understanding modernity, and his theory helps to explain why the AKP's presence in Turkish politics is such a serious diversion from Kemalism. In his understanding, modernity has two components; an intellectual discourse and a political project (104). In Kemalism, the political project of modernity required an intellectual discourse that focused on secularism. The AKP, however, has realized that Islam represents the majority of Turks and is, in fact, a serious element of their identity (106). The AKP offers what Donmez calls a "Conservative Democracy," and aims to reconcile "a democratic system of government with values and social practices derived from the Islamic intellectual heritage" (Bazzi 107). In coordination with Bazzi's theory of modernity, the AKP uses Islam as its intellectual discourse and modernity as its political project, though through the manifestation of democracy (107). The concept of modernity equaling democracy is the great ideological underpinning of the AKP and its political power in Turkey.

As was mentioned above, Kemalist visions of modernization go hand in hand with the project of Westernization, of becoming like Europe. As Kemalism and the AKP's current political project involving Islamic modernity compete for power in Turkey, it's crucial to inspect the third player influencing Turkish domestic politics and what it means in the context of modernity. It was during Turkey's still

continuing project of modernization and following the ideals set forth in Kemalism, that a new beacon of modernity was created. It seemed fate that after several decades of Turkey's desire and processes designed to become just like Europe, that Europe appeared to start a club that would be the epitome of Westernization for Turkey: the EU.

When the present day EU was still in its early stages as the European Economic Community (EEC), Turkey promptly applied for membership. The foundation of what is today's EU had been around for less than a decade when Turkey requested membership in 1959. Though Turkey was deemed unsuitable for membership at the time, it was offered different agreements that were focused on connecting the European and Turkish economies. As the EU began to grow and accept more candidate states as members, Turkey decided to apply for full membership in 1987. Once more it was determined that Turkey would not be admitted.

When the EEC began, its focus was mostly based on integrating the member states' economies. However, by the time that the EU finally accepted Turkey as a full membership candidate and negotiations were launched in 2005, membership in this association involved much more than economic interests. The EU is a political project which has no comparison for its size, scope, or depth of connection. It is a supranational body whose concerns now touch all manner of society. The process of accession, the massive institutional and legal reform required in integration, is challenging and extensive. And while Turkey has begun the process, its progress has been by all measures, slow. Since 2005, only one of the 35 negotiating chapters is provisionally closed and the majority of the remainder are officially "frozen" and therefore inactive (European Commission 2014).

The irony of Turkey's relationship with the EU is that the EU is itself essentially a modernization project. And while Turkey has been engaged in its own efforts towards modernity, it has yet to be fully embraced by the EU. The EU's modernization project has proven to be a powerful force. It is the

desired association for any European country hoping to reach the pinnacle of modernity. In this light, it makes complete sense that Turkey would set its sights on this exclusive membership. In examining different views on Europeanization, Alper Kaliber sees that “the EU found the opportunity to impose its conception of modernity and development through accession” (31). Accession has proven incredibly effective in spreading the EU’s definition of modernity, defined by Hughes, Sasse, and Gordon as “legitimated around a collective identity based on liberal norms of capitalist democracy” (13).

Europeanization, as concerning the EU’s definition, changes the structure of a state’s modernity to a “more pluralistic, inclusive, and participatory paradigm,” which is in stark contrast to Kemalism’s top-down methodology (Kaliber 32). Europeanization involves some level of top-down change, but its main goal is for societies to accept and embrace the new modernity that the EU offers. This change begins when “the actors holding social and political capital learn and internalize European rules, norms and institutions so as to redefine their identities and interests” (Kaliber 34). In this process the EU replaces the state in furthering the desired conception of modernity.

The EU modernization project also offers something important to members through accession. The process of implementing the required reforms and generating domestic change is a journey to becoming modernized. Kaliber states that once “‘European-Wide’ norms, rules, and procedures get diffused and the institutional and policy misfit between the domestic and EU level is eliminated,” the process of modernization is complete (36). So when debating the EU’s notion of modernity, it is imperative to recognize that this modernization project offers an end to the quest of ‘true’ modernity. As a supranational organization, the EU is not a domestic political actor in this debate over modernity. The EU is a modernization project that can be adapted by any domestic political actor, and if accession is completed, modernity can be achieved. At this point, the EU’s role is solidified and its position made permanent and institutionalized, making it a separate class of domestic actor. Therefore the EU

operates in a different realm of political modernity than Kemalism and the AKP, even though all interact and compete within the Turkish domestic political context.

It is in this context of competing narratives that the current debate surrounding modernity in Turkey is raging. It is torn between its historical backbone of Kemalism and its powerful new political path directed by the AKP. Yet the EU and its unprecedented modernity project still pulls powerfully, representing what both sides desire and disdain at the same time. Exploring the intersection of these three parties at work in Turkish domestic politics will help to illuminate the importance of modernity in Turkish politics and society, and better predict what “modern Turkey” may look like in the future.

METHODOLOGY

My methodological approach in performing this research question was an exploratory qualitative method. My paper includes a brief history of Kemalism and the discussion of modernity in Turkey, with the main focus being the current political use of modernity by the current domestic actors; Kemalists and the AKP. This is done through discourse analysis of Kemalist, AKP and EU documents and political statements. I focus on recently introduced Turkish legislation and parliament activity to highlight the official changes in political focus. I also analyze statements and conversations around recent highly publicized political scandals and events, as these happenings are deeply connected to the debate surrounding Turkey’s future and modernity question.

Books and academic articles form the foundation of my research sources, as the conversation of scholars and academics, most of them Turkish and a number of them public intellectuals, is essential in forming a clear and meaningful political thought groundwork. E. Fuat Keyman, one of the foremost scholars on Turkish modernity and Leda-Agapi Glyptis provide several works discussing the intersection of modernity and politics in Turkey. Yaprak Gürsoy also provides insight into Turkish civil-military relations in the context of EU reforms. Turkish newspapers are also relevant in the context of

modernity, aiding in the understanding of different current events as well acting as a gauge of public reaction. Hurriyet Daily News is currently the oldest English newspaper in Turkey with a secular and liberal viewpoint. It has a respectable lineup of journalists providing thoughts on events in Turkey. Today's Zaman is another respectable English newspaper in Turkey. Today's Zaman is generally associated as a more conservative paper with ties to followers of the Gülen Movement. In following both Hurriyet Daily News and Today's Zaman, these papers help to provide a wider base of news from two different opinions in Turkey. Reporters without Borders World Press Freedom Index from 2014 and 2015 provide current discussion on the situation of freedom of the press. The Freedom House Freedom in the World 2014 and 2015 reports also provide an outside opinion of political and social freedom in Turkey. EU documents provide a helpful, authoritative answer to the stance of the organization. I use the European Commission Progress Reports from 2011-2014 to gauge EU opinion on Turkish domestic politics and Turkey's harmonization progress. The use of public opinion polls and surveys is also important to better illustrate more definite societal feelings in areas concerned with modernity. I utilized a Pew Research Center Global Attitudes and Trends Survey, an Ankara-based MetroPOLL survey published in Today's Zaman, along with a Gallup poll and a Eurobarometer survey. Combining these different works and sources allows for a broad intake of information that can demonstrate long-term trends as well as the most current events and thoughts of the day, as Turkey's modernity discussion is at a very critical stage.

The thesis is structured through a historical examination of Kemalism, focusing on its main components as well as its faults. After tracing Kemalism's relationship with the military, follows Kemalism's moral legitimization issues, Kemalists adversaries, the struggle between Islam and secularism, and finishes with the examination the current situation of Kemalism in Turkish society and politics. Following Kemalism, an examination of the AKP begins with a focus on Islam as a societal shift, which is followed by the AKP's origins and ideology, a brief introduction of Turkey and the EU. This chapter also

includes the detailed relationship of the AKP and the EU including EU reforms as well as other initiatives put forth by the AKP. The paper is concluded by examining the present situation of Turkish modernity, focusing on the AKP and the EU, with attention to societal feelings about Turkey's recent transformation.

Chapter 1: Kemalist Modernity and its Faults

DEVIATIONS OF KEMALIST PRINCIPLES

As discussed previously, Kemalism is the collection of Atatürk's political ideas and beliefs utilized in his modernizing reforms. Kemalism was long a widely accepted and strongly held political belief; more recently, its major role in society has been questioned. This backlash against Kemalism can be observed in the success of the AKP party, a party with political ideals vastly differing from Kemalism. But the question of why Kemalism has been abandoned by some of the population, while the rest of the population maintains their religious-like belief in it can be understood with two different explanations. The first reason for the societal shift away from Kemalism involves the morphing of Atatürk's original Kemalism, into the Kemalism promoted by the military today. The second reasoning involves Kemalism's moral compass, or lack of, as Turkey's societal foundation. Both of these explanations heavily involve the role of modernity in shaping the social thoughts and feelings towards Kemalism in politics, and I will consider each in turn.

Atatürk's Kemalism entailed strict separation of military leaders and politics. He believed that for Turkey to be a modern nation, civilian supremacy must be strictly upheld (Lerner and Robinson 21). But as we know now, this foundational belief of Kemalism has not held true in practice throughout Turkey's subsequent history; for almost four decades, the Turkish military and Turkish politics instead seemed to go hand in hand. Though the military role was not always overtly active, its presence behind the scenes in the running of the Turkish state was institutionalized and societally recognized. But what caused this shift from clear civilian rule with the military in a 'background role' in politics, to the military becoming front and center directing the political scene of the nation? While the first military coup in Turkey occurred in May 1960, Lerner and Robinson analyzed the environment which led the Turkish military to abandon Atatürk's wishes.

The first necessary understanding is that the military acted as a vehicle that led Atatürk to power and created Turkey as a new state. Because of Atatürk's position, though he made clear that civilian leadership was the priority, the military's interests were always represented in government. Atatürk also knew that while Turkey was currently safe from external threats that would likely not be the case in the future. Lerner and Robinson argue that Atatürk prioritized overall modernization over updating his military because he knew that the state must be strong enough to withstand external threat. Atatürk himself stated that Turkey would be a "national and modern State founded on the latest results of science" (Kemal 723). A contemporary military is not possible without concomitant science and industry which in turn depend on "a transformed political and social system which would permit the people of Turkey to realize more fully their human potential" (Lerner and Robinson 26).

While Atatürk's social revolution encompassed reform throughout all of Turkey, reforms within the military helped to reinforce those general reforms. In the 1950's Turkey's military enacted a general education program for illiterate draftees (35). This reform came after the time of Atatürk, but is still important in understanding the military's shifting role in society. As around 50 percent of military draftees at the time were from rural areas with no formal secular education, the education of these men who would return home to their villages after their service would provide a helpful push towards the societal acceptance of the importance of education (34). More importantly, this secular brand of education not only furthered the Kemalist vision of the military recruits, but had the potential to increase demand for public secular education in the more traditional, rural areas that were reticent to follow the Kemalist education reforms (36).

This military education mission may not have directly played a role in the decision to undertake a coup, but it is certainly likely to have played a role in furthering society's acceptance of the military's role in politics at that time. Also, the fact that many regional governors had military backgrounds helped to establish the military's role in positions of power (28). While Atatürk kept a strict separation

of the military and politics, the belief was that one could not maintain a position in both roles at the same time. This meant that someone willing to leave their position in the military could then work in government or politics. The military was responsible for developing administrative talents useful to the civilian governments (28). Atatürk himself was a military man along with his Presidential successor and friend Ismet Inonu. The presence of military figures, though separate from their military identity, helped create the environment in which the Turkish military had the ability to transition roles.

The transition in roles of the military occurred after the government had begun to ease into a more democratic method of ruling. Though Atatürk wanted Turkey to be a democracy, his top-down approach and single party rule would not meet democratic requirements today. It was not until 1946 that Turkey had its first multi-party elections and it was in the second multiparty election in 1950 that Atatürk's party, CHP, lost power (Gürsoy, "Changing Role" 741). It was in the decade of rule by the rival Democrat Party that Turkey was undergoing social and economic turmoil, and the new governing party attempted to use the military in a new role. This new party attempted to use the military for political support, subjected promotable military men to the pressures of politics, and attacked the societal "intellectual elite" which had long been a source for the junior officer corps (41). As Lerner and Robinson point out, the current government "violat[ed] the basic Kemalist doctrine of an apolitical army – it subverted the principle of civilian supremacy" (42). The military belief was that to return to civilian supremacy, the military needed to step in and 'straighten out' the political system in a return to Kemalist principles.

Action on behalf of the military was encouraged by Ismet Inonu who told a group of retired military leaders "that it was up to them, and to the military, to protect the soundness of Turkish society and the ideals of Turkish progress and development" (43). Inonu's statement was reported in the press in April, 1960 and was not refuted. The role of the Turkish military as caretakers of the modern Turkish state in the vision of Atatürk was cemented on the morning of May 27, 1960 when the military

announced it had taken control of the state. This first coup was followed by interventions in 1971 and 1980, with other military ‘corrections’ as recently as 1997 that cannot be considered outright coups. But after each coup, “the military oversaw the drafting of a new constitutional and legal framework, increasing its own autonomy and political powers within the system” (741). So though the military returned power to civilians after holding new elections each time, they institutionalized their role within the government to minimize the chances of future governments straying from the Kemalist doctrine they believed was necessary to make Turkey a modern nation.

It was at this time that Kemalism transformed from purely Atatürk’s ideas and reforms into something different. Kemalist fear necessitated the security of Turkey, and by interfering, the military and elites interpreted Kemalism as a static concept, neglecting its ability to evolve. Kemalism now persisted purely as an idea; it could never deliver modernity or democracy, but would ensure Kemalist elites stayed in power.

IMPLICATIONS OF KEMALISM AND TURKISH MODERNITY

Though Turkey’s military has succeeded in imbedding itself in politics, and even maintained its mostly reverential position in society, their constant interference has not been without consequence. As can be witnessed by the current popularity of the AKP, a party that seems fundamentally at odds with Kemalism, not all of Turkish society is in full agreement with Kemalism and its ideology long-dominant in government. And while most supporters of Kemalism appreciate the military guiding Turkey away from “dangerous” ideas and political objectives deemed a threat to state, there are groups within Turkey that, understandably, don’t agree with the removing of a democratically elected government. This is an example of one of the critical contradictions of Kemalism.

The notion that the military has a hand in the direction of the state and even intervenes in the name of “protecting” Turkey’s modernity, from a Western perspective, seems irreconcilable. Yet in

understanding the status of current Kemalism, this is not only acceptable, it is imperative. The military staging coups and intervening to replace democratically elected governments certainly would not pass the definition of Western standards of modernity. Yet these acts occurred in Turkey between the years of 1960 and 1997 under the premise of protecting this very concept as put forth by Atatürk as a plan of Westernization. This illustrates the complex notion of modernity and what it entails and means within Turkey, and how this Turkish concept of modernity differs from the West.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MODERNIZATION AND MORAL LEGITIMATION

Şerif Mardin, a well-known Turkish scholar whose vocal and controversial statements about Islam in Turkish politics, has a very useful take on Kemalism's current situation. Stating that Islam has claimed victory over the Republic, he raises an important point; "The republic has not given the question of what is good, right and aesthetic and deeper consideration. That is the deficiency of Kemalism" (qtd. in Karaveli 89). Mardin elaborates that while the West has had philosophers and theorists that developed foundational beliefs, "the republic has nothing of the kind, no philosophy of ethics, to display" (qtd. In Karaveli 89). While the ideology of Kemalism has a clear and elaborate foundation of thought (essentially Atatürk's words and actions in the early days of the Republic), he is correct in pointing out that Kemalism lacks a convincing ethical/moral rationale. Why must Turkey be modern? Because it must join the advanced civilizations and escape from its backward traditionalism is the Kemalist answer. But this explanation alone lacks deeper meaning. Why must the state be free from the influence of Islam? Because that is how it is in the West, and that is what it takes to be modern isn't a constructive answer. But at its basic level, that is the Kemalist reasoning. Turkey's experience of modernity differs from the West's in important ways that have frayed the persuasiveness of Kemalism in recent times.

Karaveli notes that in response to Mardin's statements, others have pointed out that the Kemalists who have been in government since Atatürk's time have failed to develop these essential "secular notions of good and right, of secular ethics" (Karaveli 90). Instead, these military and party leaders have been insistent on Atatürk's original vision and ideas. To articulate anything deeper wasn't seen as necessary, and an organic source of new secular ideas from within Turkey never occurred. A possible symptom indicating Kemalism's moral void is the fact that in the 1970s the government took philosophy out of the high school curriculum. Also, during the military rule in the early 1980s, religion and ethics were combined as a single subject, implying that religion was an adequate source of morals and neglecting the need for deeper political thought (Karaveli 90). Without being aware, Kemalists had acknowledged that Kemalism neglected to offer a convincing replacement for the Islam it removed.

In general, the failure of the state to produce an appropriate set of meaningful ethics or guiding moral compass can be attributed to two explanations. The first is the failure of the state after Atatürk's death to conform to Kemalist teachings, or rather, the too strict of following of Kemalist teachings, denying the natural progression and growth Atatürk had anticipated. Atatürk's ideal modern individual was "Western in outlook and freed from superstition and religious orthodoxy" (Karaveli 90). Creating this individual would take time, but the deviations in Kemalist applications failed to produce Kemalist individuals who sought to create the modernity that Atatürk dreamt of. Instead, the state created individuals that followed Kemalism like it was its own religious doctrine, never seeking deeper validation that would spread its reception to those who struggled to accept it as a legitimate authority. This ties into the second explanation behind Kemalism's lack of moral compass, which is that Turkey lacked the same political background and history that led to modernization in the West. Atatürk modeled his plan for modernity on the experience of the West, and this imitation of institutions but lack of shared past has led to different outcomes in Turkey.

For Atatürk, modernization and secularization went hand in hand. While this may have been true in the West, the main problem was that modernization and secularization “was a “naturally” evolving process in the West,” and by all accounts, Kemalism in Turkey was not (Karaveli 91). This Western “modernity” evolved over centuries, and can be attributed to the intolerance and violence in medieval Europe which subsequently legitimized “the notion that belief was a matter of opinion, fostering a culture of dissent, of tolerance or skepticism” (Karaveli 95). Kemalism was a top-down process that didn’t take into consideration that modernization in the West (the ideological point of reference) was a “mechanism of social transformation,” and was unlikely to be broadly accepted by Turkish society (Bazzi 106). Most importantly, the biggest issue that Kemalism neglected to understand was that;

“Western secularization was driven by societal dynamics, the rise of capitalism and of its bourgeoisie, which had empowered individuals, and of the concomitant evolution of natural sciences that expressed an emancipation of the mind that undermined the church’s claim to the truth” (Karaveli 91).

Kemalism removed religion from the state, but it did not remove the place of Islam as the guiding truth of the population.

Not only was Turkey lacking the same context that led a more natural progression towards modernity and secularization, the state has always struggled to define an appropriate modern citizen-state relationship. Hürsoy discusses the pluralist concept that effective states and societies are involved in a “mutually transformative relationship;” while the state structure interacts with society, it does not determine societal relations. He then recalls Özbuden who acknowledges that the Turkish model operates outside of the pluralist state model; “the state is valued in its own right, is relatively autonomous from society, and plays a tutelary and paternalistic role. This paternalistic image is reflected in the popular expression *devlet baba* (father state)” (Hürsoy 51). The lack of societal mobilization in the creation of the Turkish state has led to an unhealthy relationship between the

citizens and the state. Instead of a mutual relationship where the citizens feel they have a voice in their government, the Republic treats its citizens as if they are children, always getting into trouble and not believing that they are mature enough to make their own decisions. This is the type of thinking that justifies the removal of democratically elected governments and strict pressure on the media; maintaining close control over citizens seen as important security measures implemented with the Kemalist mindset that it is for their own good. The 1920s Kemalist slogan “for the people, despite the people,” still underlies the Kemalist outlook and actions of the state today (Taspinar).

Kemalism believed that Turkey could become a modern nation “through the introduction and the dissemination of Western reason and rationality into what was regarded as a traditional and backward social formation” (Keyman, “Modernization” 318). But without a good reason to abandon the traditional society (where Islam was the center of politics and the community), Kemalism failed to provide an appealing call to the conservative religious populations that had nothing to gain by embracing Atatürk’s secular reforms. In theory, Kemalism would create a better, stronger, and most importantly, modern society that would lead to the improvement of Turkey’s situation (as had occurred in the West with modernization). But this state-disseminated ideology lacked compelling meaning to different components of society: all minorities, but most importantly Kurds, along with deeply religious individuals who felt that religion should be an essential part of the state.

Atatürk’s mission was to replace the role of Islam with nationalism, as he witnessed in the West. However, “In Europe, nationalism arose to fill the void left by religion, where the void was already created by the Enlightenment” (Gülap 356). Turkey did not have such a void, and at the end of the Ottoman order, “the public and political role of religion had not declined...and hence nationalism could only be imposed by directly trying to displace religion” (Gülap 356). Though Atatürk was successful in drawing many together in the birth of the Turkish Republic under nationalism, Kemalism as a whole neglected to offer many people something as substantial as the Ottoman order did; “it was religion that

supplied that ultimate meaning of politics; what legitimated power was the perception that it upheld a religiously defined order” (Karaveli 92). The experience of the fall of the Ottoman Empire was not at all similar to the changes that occurred in the West, it had not been “shattered by capitalism, science, or ideological relativism, which centuries of intra-religious strife has fostered in the West, undermining Christianity from within” (Karaveli 92). This lack of a natural movement away from Islam as the organizing component of government meant that top-down secularism was doomed to struggle for full legitimation. And this is exactly what has occurred in Turkey.

The Kemalist modernization plan also has another serious fault in its implementation; rather than “a self-generating societal process... modernizers wield state power and are agents of their own interests. For this reason, even if they profess a project of Westernization, they are not necessarily committed to all dimensions of modernity” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 39). Atatürk was committed to setting the stage so that over time, Turkey would have caught up to the West and then be on the same level, becoming an equal, making similar political and economic decisions that matched their achievement in modernity, though he recognized that there would be initial flaws. However, the Kemalist elite in the decades since Atatürk’s death have not been fully committed to ‘all dimensions of modernity;’ they are committed to keeping Turkey safe and protecting Atatürk’s ideas. What Atatürk’s modernity looks like would, I believe, be democracy and capitalist markets like the West.

But Turkey does not have a complete Western-style democracy, and it is in part because Kemalists have felt that their citizens must be controlled and directed. Turkey has a modernity debate because Kemalism has failed to achieve this ideal. Its top-down approach has failed to convert reluctant citizens who felt Kemalism betrayed their political principles. The military and state elites chose to interpret Kemalism as a static ideal. Modernity is the ever important goal, a place where Turkey is heading as long as the country sticks to Atatürk’s blueprint. But because of a rigid interpretation of this plan, modernization has never developed as organically as expected.

Kemalism has nonetheless been incredibly successful as an ideology. Its popularity and fervor among many in the population cannot be denied. But this does not negate the fact that Kemalism has been incredibly problematic for many Turks, which has led to many to question its effectiveness and role in society. There are numerous difficulties and faults with Kemalism (as with any ideological system), but the most obvious and troublesome is its relationship with Islam and secularism. The place of Islam in Turkey is the most significant contemporary issue in the debates between Kemalists, the AKP, and the EU for what modernity really means.

KEMALIST ADVERSARIES

Atatürk did not come to power without opposition, and his radical transformation of Turkey set the stage for the political and societal difficulties that still plague the nation. Atatürk's design had clear ambitions that were to guide Turkey to the pinnacle of modernity;

“[Atatürk] had envisioned for Turkey an organized, well-articulated, linear process of modernization through which the whole nation was going to move simultaneously and with uniform experience. At the end of this process, there would emerge a militantly secular, ethnically homogenous republic well on its way to catching up with the civilized nations of the West” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 17).

What Turkey looks like nine decades later has certainly failed to live up to this expectation of Kemalist unity. Rather, the divide between “Muslim and secularist, Turk and Kurd, reason and faith, rural and urban – in short, the old and the new” is very much alive with the distinctions dividing society now even stronger (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 17). Kemalism did not unite Turkey as planned; rather, it created deep fissures, particularly surrounding Kurds and Islamists that have only widened with time.

As the guardians of this original Kemalist vision, the Turkish military has played an integral role in trying to keep the belief of Kemalist modernity alive while fending off all perceived threats to its continuation. And according to the Kemalists, the threats are plentiful; the “state elite, including the intellectual-bureaucratic elite and military, distrusts all forms of activity, whether they be primarily

ethnic or religious, and perceives them as a threat to the centralized unitary ideology of the Turkish state” (Hürsoy 52). The ethnic and religious activity referred to is mostly directed at Kurds and radical Islamists. However, the definition of what constitutes “radical Islam” is broad, and in the minds of Kemalists could be anyone who simply tries to marry Islam and politics, regardless of whether or not their ideology would actually be considered radical in a broader sense.

While these *fears* are real, whether or not such perceived threats can truly harm the nation isn’t questioned; the answer is always yes. The fundamentalist thinking of Kemalism requires that the state be secular and it’s a fact that the nation is made of Turks. Atatürk sought to negate the Ottoman past which “had relied on multi-ethnicity and multi-religiosity” which he saw as playing into its downfall (Demir 385). This mistake would not be repeated. The Kemalist elite act on Atatürk’s words:

“Our thinking and our mentality will have to become civilized. And we will be proud of this civilization. Take a look at the entire Turkish and Islamic world. Because they failed to adapt to the conditions and rise, they found themselves in such a catastrophe and suffering. We cannot afford to hesitate any more. We have to move forward... Civilization is such a fire that it burns and destroys those who ignore it” (qtd. in Bozdoğan and Kasaba 27, 28)

Atatürk’s speeches offered grave, urgent declarations, and these are still the words that Kemalists live by. Civilization, i.e. modernity, must be achieved or Turkey will suffer the same fate of the Ottomans and other “backward” societies. Maintaining Kemalist purity is the only way to protect Turkish modernity and Islamist and Kurdish separatist activities violate this Kemalist essentialism, and are rightly feared in the minds of the Kemalist elite.

The Turkish nation was defined by Atatürk as a territorial identity, those within the boundaries of the state are a part of the Turkish nation, and are therefore Turks (Gülap 356). Acknowledging the rights of Kurds would be a recognition that the Kurds are a separate group apart from Turks (as defined by Atatürk, a Turk is a Turk, and he purposefully neglected to acknowledge the Kurds status as anything other than “Turk”). The Kurdish Problem that is commonly externally discussed concerning Turkey still

remains an issue, but only from the outside, as “Kemalists deny the existence of a “Kurdish Problem” and speak mostly in euphemisms such as “terrorism” and “underdevelopment”” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 17). There is the belief that external forces look to tear apart Turkey, and the Kurds are a pawn in this game. Despite the fact that in the 1980s Kurds strongly “reclaimed and reasserted their distinct cultural and ethnic identity and use it as a basis for organizing an armed struggle against the Turkish army,” Kemalists refuse to acknowledge that Kurds deserve any type of minority rights (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 16). Doing so would go against the Kemalist ideology and would threaten the unity and stability of the state. And while the struggle of the Kurds has received attention by the EU and other international groups interested in human rights, within Turkey the result of this conflict with the Kurdish insurgent group, the PKK, has generally only increased hostility towards Kurds.

The fear of the partitioning of Turkey by the Kurds is only surpassed by the alarm of radical Islam pulling Turkey back to the Ottoman days of traditionalism and backwardness. Despite Kemalists’ efforts, there is still a sizeable portion of the population that wishes to see Islam play a part in government and politics. This has led to a partitioning of society among three major fault lines: “The Kemalist, Islamist, and Kurdish nationalist ideologies share a strong intolerance for one another” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 18). The common enemy for Islamist and Kurdish groups is the Turkish state, but these groups share no other commonalities. Because of the strength of each ideology and focus on what they believe is the right, modern path, with “each position hold[ing] the key to absolute and complete truth,” they are demonstrative of Turkish politics as a whole (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 18). These divergent fundamentalist beliefs have led to an impenetrable polarization of Turkish politics that has been present since the founding of the Republic.

KEMALISM AND QUESTIONS OF RELIGION AND SECULARISM

Because the intersection of Islam, secularism, and the state is such a contentious issue in Turkey, it is essential to understand the connection between Islam and the state, and how this relationship was created by Kemalism. It is also important to appreciate the differences between religion and the state in Turkey under Kemalist secularism and in the West, which Atatürk sought to emulate. The most important belief in Kemalism is the acceptance of secularism as a necessary component of modernity. Kemalist ideology champions strict secularism, painting the picture that a state involving religion simply cannot be modern, as it goes against a defining pillar of Kemalism. Yet from the beginning of the Republic, Islam has been a component of government. This relationship seems out of place, given the centrality of secularism in Kemalist doctrine and the fact that since the founding of the Republic, Kemalism has been the enemy of Islam. But Atatürk understood that Islam could not simply disappear overnight, and he realized that he would have to work around Islam in some matters, but also work with it in others. Kemalism's secularization plan was to first "relegate religion into the private realm" (Gülap 356).

What Atatürk wanted his Turkish Republic model of secularism to look like was based on the French model of *laïcité*. Kemalism continued on with the strict ideology that religion and state must be separate in Turkey, with the common belief that there is indeed pure secularism in Turkey. However, in reality, from the very beginning the Turkish Republic has maintained a relationship with Islam. Though the first step was to move religion from public to private spheres, it most importantly acted with the belief that "Islam was not to be reformed, it was to be controlled" (Karaveli 100). With the very founding of the Republic, Atatürk created state institutions for regulating religious matters. The Presidency of Religious Affairs was seen as a necessity and was created mostly to guard against "the misuse of religious affairs" (Akyüz 65).

By placing control of religious services in a state institution, the state could monitor all Islamic activity that could threaten to undermine the state. Under this office after the founding of the Republic;

“the finances of religious foundations were brought under state control; religion schools...were closed, and in their place Imam-Hatip schools were created to train preachers and other religious personnel in accordance with the priorities of the nationalist regime” (Gülap 357).

Dervish lodges and all religious orders and brotherhoods were believed to be the “sources for reactionary movements,” and were subsequently closed and outlawed (Akyüz 68, Gülap). The existence of these religious organizations were of course considered backward in Atatürk’s mind, and their continued presence would have created an environment that undermined his reforms. Understanding that Islam was still a fact of life for the vast majority of the population, there was need for the state to monitor and control religious activities.

The department was believed necessary to deter activities that “might be against the values of the Republic,” and in fact, the current Turkish state (since the 1980s) utilizes this office to employ Islam to meet “the moral needs of the nation” (Akyüz 68, Keyman, “Remaking” 39). Specifically, the 1982 Turkish Constitution Article 136 states that the Presidency of Religion Affairs shall act “in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity.” Also through this department, the state decides what areas of life are “national,” and what areas are religious. The state is closely involved in determining where these “separations” exist in the complicated realm of where “legal-constitutional, official ceremonial, and parliamentary practice” intersect through “executive and judicial enforcement and control by the state” (Keyman, “Remaking” 39). The existence of this department deeply involved in regulating religion within a secular state is a basic contradiction, and the presence of this governmental department in a secular state has resulted in some obvious gray areas, especially in politics. Political association around religion is strictly regulated and is an example of the oddly defined “separations” between religion and

politics, demonstrating the “power relationship constituted by purposes of control and oversight” (Keyman, “Remaking” 39).

The idea of the state being in a role of control and oversight over religion is a description of secularism that clearly strays from the French version of Laicism that Atatürk sought to copy, and is even much different than how secularism is conceived in the West in general. Glyptis sees that Atatürk’s model of Turkish *laiklik* is actually “a system that is neither fully ‘secular’ nor ‘laic’” (“Kemalism” 170). Rather, a more honest interpretation of what Kemalists call secularism is “a form of “political Islam” – state sanctioned religion and morality for the nation, not “no religion;” integrated, related, and co-functioning political and religious spheres, not “fully autonomous spheres of governance” (Keyman, “Remaking” 40). While the end goal may have allowed for Turkey to relinquish its control over religion, Atatürk recognized that this step would not be possible until the second step of his secularization process was completed.

The importance of nationalism in Turkey is well understood, and Atatürk wanted it this way, as the second part of his secularization plan was to ultimately replace Islam with nationalism. Moving religion to the private sphere, the nation was meant to take its place in the public sphere, becoming the most important concern to citizens. As long as the state acted to meet the needs of the nation, and the nation was the most important thing, the removal of Islam from the political sphere would not be missed. Atatürk’s hope was that the importance of the nation would replace the importance of the religious community. Though Kemalism’s emphasis on the nation took hold in the beginning, and as anyone familiar with Turkish nationalism can attest, it is still very much alive today, nationalism nonetheless failed to sufficiently replace Islam in its role as unifier of Turkish society.

The outcome of Kemalism’s struggle to achieve a secular government and remove Islam’s strength in society has been a many decades long battle for legitimacy. For Kemalists, trying to keep

Islamists out of politics is a job that seemingly never ends. This is because bringing Islam into politics seems a natural step to many, and Kemalists have been quick to seek out and dismember parties that they believe are unconstitutional by their association with Islam. The interesting relationship between the state and Islam has actually become more complicated since the 1980s during the military rule after a coup. This relationship has only tightened the connection between the Turkish state and Islam, and more importantly, opened the door to Islamic politics that has had lasting repercussions.

ISLAM AND POLITICS AND THE LIBERAL CONNECTION

When the military staged their third coup in 1980, a key goal was to change Turkish politics to prevent the need for another episode of military intervention. Kemalists and the military had been unable to restore stability during the past decade and therefore needed to make bold moves to create the social and political stability they wanted to support the economic stability reforms they needed. The group of top military commanders that ruled for three years was the National Security Council (NSC). The first step of the NSC was to outlaw political action, an attempt to depoliticize society, which was followed by taking control of the education system, in hopes of socializing the new generations within this new agenda (essentially an altered Kemalism) (Glyptis, "Kemalism"; Birtek and Toprak). These steps were combined with one more daring move by Kemalists, which they determined to be the cure for society's ills (though, would eventually be recognized as a huge mistake on the part of Kemalists). This bold move enacted by the NSC in the 1980's was the first open marriage of Kemalism and Islam. In their "attempt to forge social cohesion and wholesome values (respect for authority and family-orientation)," the NSC openly promoted the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis as the new state ideology. This did not replace Kemalism, rather it adapted Kemalism to the state's immediate needs, expanding Turkish national identity to include Islam (Blad and Koçer 47). This new state plan incorporated Islam to foster a "sense of moral community" through the pairing of nationalism and shared morality (Birtek and Toprak 196).

The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis was to foster social stability, which would be the basis for the NSC to radically restructure the economy “in accordance with neoliberal ideology” (Blad and Koçer 44). The plan was to connect “the individual with the state, and... serve as a unifying force between different classes and strata” which would help control “unnecessary conflicts that rapid marketization of the traditional economic relations might engender” (Birtek and Toprak 196). The state was transitioning towards market-oriented reforms in response to conditionality terms by the IMF and World Bank to receive loans Turkey desperately needed (Atasoy 76). To protect society from the backlash potential of new economic reform policies, the NSC focused on incorporating Islam into the cultural foundation of the state. This related more specifically to the economic realm as it was used in the “Islamization of Turkish labor through the state advocacy of cultural, rather than the traditional class-based, trade union organizations” as well as “the reduction of state-managed social service provision and the privatization of these services under Islamist patronage” (Blad and Koçer 45).

While privatizing social services and education helps to reduce public spending in line with neoliberal ideology, it also “had the supplementary effect of shifting legitimacy from secular to cultural institutions” (Blad and Koçer 47). The economic reforms combined with large-scale urbanization at the time “exacerbated income inequality, and a need for social services that only Islamic institutions seemed to be providing” (Blad and Koçer 47). This spread of Islamic welfare groups providing relief, as opposed to the state in the new time of hardship is cited by multiple authors as a cause for the ““Islamization” of impoverished urban communities” (Blad and Koçer 47, 48).

Like the Kemalist version of secularism, this injection of Islam was used as means for social control. This was poorly calculated, though; “They used religion, thinking they could contain it, in an attempt to forge a more socially homogenous and less politically active community” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 176). And in effect, with the neoliberalization of the state, Kemalists legitimized Islamic politics (Blad and Koçer 48). This was an unintended effect, as it seems that military failed to fully

formulate the consequences of their actions. Birtek and Toprak believed that the military viewed “the practice of Islam a passing phase relevant only until Turkey completed its transition to modernity, and until the functional alternative of religion would take root” (197). This is the same line of thought followed by Atatürk, and while the promotion of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis seems a far cry from the necessary secularism, if the military believed that these neoliberal reforms would help Turkey finally achieve modernity, and that modernity would finally phase Islam from society, then this new ideology is easier to understand. Nonetheless, these changes have left a serious, lasting impact; “Islam has found a new role as a social movement with substantial political leverage” making Islam a mainstream, political part of Turkish society (Birtek and Toprak 194).

This new state plan embedding Islam as a component of Turkish society was intended to compel social integration and ease economic reforms, but also “to undercut the political agenda embedded in the reconstructive vision of the Left” (Birtek and Toprak 207). As part of the depoliticization of society, it was not just Islamists the Kemalists were hoping to appease. As Atasoy points out, along with closing political parties, trade unions, and civil-society associations the military arrested thousands of people, over half of which were leftists (84, 85). This “regime of fear” established in the 1980s coup “created a political environment of widespread state coercion and violation of many fundamental rights and freedoms” (Atasoy 80).

This sharp turn in Turkish society towards authoritarianism in the name of Kemalism only strengthened the Left’s belief that there must be another political option in Turkey. In understanding the direction of the Left, Karaveli points out the differences between the typical Leftist ideologies in the West and those in Turkey; “In the West, liberalism has historically been anti-clerical and represented the rejection of the notion that inherited loyalties, religion, or tradition have any binding authority. Turkish liberalism has a different history, one of alliance with pro-religious conservatism” (95, 96). And as a result of the actions of the state, “Repelled by the authoritarianism of Kemalists, the otherwise secular,

modernist liberals are apt to look for deliverance by Islam, attributing an emancipating potential to religiosity by default” (Karaveli 96).

THE CURRENT POSITION OF KEMALISM

The 1980s coup effectively united Kemalism with state sanctioned Islam, leading to increased acceptance of the idea that Islam was a natural, important part of Turkish culture. Economic reforms led to a restructuring of social services that also focused on Islam, particularly in education and charity organizations. The Left, dismayed by the strict authoritarianism showcased by the Kemalist elite joined forces with Islamist politics in promoting a new, more open political path. The connection between the Left and Islam has left deep marks on Kemalism;

“While legitimizing Islamic conservatism, the liberals have concomitantly delegitimized Kemalism... Liberal think tanks and privately funded universities have contributed to creating and sustaining a new, anti-Kemalist paradigm” (Karaveli 86)

Karaveli sees that both Kemalism and liberalism are both “in collusion with religious conservatism” (89)

He enumerates that “Turkish liberalism is explicit in its reverence for Islam, while Kemalism has implicitly acknowledged its dependence on religion” (89). With liberals and Kemalists harboring implicit support for Islam, it seems only natural that Islamic parties would continue to be elected, even after, and maybe even especially, since the 1980s reforms by the military.

The constitution put forth by the NSC in 1982 made Kemalism the official state doctrine, making any straying from that belief unconstitutional. The constitution also “makes it clear that containing religious influences and safeguarding secularism is an ongoing task” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 174). For example, the Preamble of this Constitution (still Turkey’s current) states that “sacred religious feelings shall absolutely not be involved in state affairs and politics as required by the principle of secularism.” References to the secular nation of the state and its need to be protected is mentioned throughout the document. And though the reforms of the 1980s were intended to end the need for military

involvement by their attempt to bridge the gap between the state's secularism and the population's religion; the election of an openly Islamist party, the Welfare Party in the mid-1990s created the need to reset the state back to Kemalism. Necmettin Erbakan, the Prime Minister elected by the Welfare Party's minority government in 1996, was a controversial and erratic leader (Glyptis, "Kemalism"). His open Islamism and Euroskepticism gave rise to the widespread belief that "the democratic process had to be suspended to save secularism" (Atasoy 179). So it was in February 1997 that the Turkish military, fighting "the dark forces of reactionaryism," staged a 'postmodern coup' providing the government 18 recommendations to protect the secular character of the Republic (Atasoy 88). This act by the military, with the endorsement by bureaucrats and politicians, led to the resignation of the government in July of that year with the subsequent banning of the Welfare Party from politics (Atasoy; Glyptis, "Kemalism").

Some Kemalist supporters see this time as a sort of a rebirth of the "true" Kemalism that the military was supposed to stand for after the flaws of the 1980s Turkish-Islamic Synthesis. But the damage to Kemalist legitimacy within Turkish society had been done, and the role of the 1980s coup only "created a legitimating precedent for Islamists, while also enabling them to attempt a redefinition of secularism and its relationship with modernity without rejecting Kemalism" (Glyptis, "Kemalism" 177). The overall neoliberal changes to the state have led to the promotion of religious institutions providing services that work to "circumvent state-centered power relationships" that has worked "to create a cultural constituency fully supportive" of the Welfare Party, and the current ruling party, the AKP (Blad and Koçer 49). The AKP lacked the same open Islamist leanings as the Welfare Party, but is still realistically considered what Blad and Koçer call "implied Islamist."

The ideology and Islamic leanings of the AKP will be explored more fully in the following chapter, but its presence as the ruling party in Turkey since 2002 proves that Islamic orientated parties (whether implied or overt) over the past few decades have proven themselves to be a force to be reckoned with.

And though their presence seems foreign to Kemalism, it raises the question of whether this was always destined to be an inevitability of Kemalist modernity;

“The Kemalist heritage was committed to the Western sociopolitical system, but if that system was implemented, then sooner or later people who flirted with religion and betrayed the Kemalist tradition would win the elections. Either you give up democracy and in doing so contradict the principles you are supposed to be applying or else you implement it, in which case you allow people to win who will, in turn, betray it” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 243).

This is the perfect summation of how Kemalism has played out in the past, and is currently functioning in Turkish politics. The result of this Kemalist dilemma is that it created a political system founded on democratic elections allowed by the military, which leads to a party being elected that fails to stick to the Kemalists standards, which leads to the military staging a coup to rid the government of the Kemalist challengers (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 243). Then the process repeats. The progression towards achieving modernity, which would include democracy, raises the important question; will true democracy in Turkey result in an Islamist ruling party? While there is no looking into the future, it is true that the past and present situation in Turkey has proven this to be true.

This comprehensive overview of Kemalism and its changes throughout time have revealed deep contradictions. These contradictions are important because, as Karaveli notes, it leaves many in Turkish society “ready to embrace any force that would present itself as the democratic alternative to a Kemalism that had come to be employed as an instrument for legitimizing oppression” (87). And in fulfilling the democracy that citizens want, and Kemalist modernity calls for, moderate Islam has been cast as this new democratic alternative (Karaveli 87). This has created a dilemma in Turkey about the future of the country and its very definition of modernity; “Having retained, until recently, a monopoly over the definition of modernity, Kemalists do not perceive Islamism as an alternative perception of modernity but as opposition to it” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 179). There is no question that current Kemalist thought is incompatible with Islam.

The question of what it means to be a modern state that includes Islam in any way, has intensified the polarization of Turkish politics to society. Glyptis discusses how Turkish politics has been seemingly divided into two camps; the secularist and the Islamist; though she doesn't think things are so simple. Both sides are "heavily fragmented and diverse," though "both sides use, to varying degrees, Kemalist legitimization narratives in the public arena" ("Kemalism" 178). What this means is that "the state can now be used to serve both secular and Islamist aims, often simultaneously. This creates potential for confusion and conflict, but more importantly, it creates space for the pursuit of many conflicting agendas concurrently" (Glyptis, "Kemalism" 178). The current state of Turkish politics can be classified as containing much confusion and conflict, certainly with conflicting agendas as well. Kemalists and the AKP have made the question of what it means to be modern a classic matter of debate. I will next examine the rise and rule of the AKP and its influence on the Turkish political conversation through an alternative use of modernity, while also exploring the role of the EU in the Turkish domestic political scene.

Chapter 2: AKP Modernity and the European Union

AKP AND ISLAM AS A SOCIETAL SHIFT

While the discussion of Kemalism is essential to understanding the political environment in which Turkey has operated for several decades, the exploration of the AKP is equally important. As the current ruling party in Turkey it is of great interest; however, the AKP currently plays a role in the conversation of Turkish modernity that goes much deeper than its position as the main party in government. The AKP has helped to redefine modernity in Turkey. Its particular idea of modernity does not replace Kemalism; rather it is offered an alternative conception of modernity that is powerful and persuasive, and has helped to mobilize a large section of society that finds this new modernity meritorious. And while the AKP has only been in power since 2002, its presence has made serious and lasting changes on the Turkish domestic political landscape, and most importantly, on the concept of how modernity is perceived in Turkey.

As traced in the previous chapter, the Turkish political and social situation from the 1980s on faced many changes that led to a greater emphasis on Islamic organizations. The presence and greater visibility of Islamic organizations combined with a rise in the prominence of conservative Muslim businessmen, created a social environment that was much more open to political Islam than in the past. This is not to say that a new population hoping for Islam in politics was suddenly awakened at this time, but that conditions created by the infusion of Islam into society as a moral compass by the government combined with changes stemming from the actual neoliberal economic reforms created a society that had a greater focus on Islam, and a population that was ready to infuse these thoughts into government.

It is important to at least note the role of the Gülen Movement (*Hizmet* in Turkish) and its influence on society and the AKP. Though the two groups come from different backgrounds with dissimilar aims, there was an implicit relationship between the Gülen Movement and the AKP during its

early days. The Gülen movement, named for its founder, Islamic scholar and preacher Fethullah Gülen, claims to operate strictly as an Islamic social movement, and does not believe in politicizing Islam. Its role as a social movement, however, has certainly impacted how pious Muslim individuals vote, which can be seen in the popularity of the AKP and its connection of support. Also, its societal presence and networks has led its relationship (and subsequent very public and heated dispute or rift currently underway) with the AKP to be viewed in a more political light, and its very existence and nature of operation has made it intrinsically political.

Overall the Gülen movement has helped to question the Kemalist understanding of modernity. Gülen promotes “Turkish Islam,” which he sees as compatible with democracy and modernity. But this promotion of Islam and modernity points out the flaws promoted in the Western (Kemalist) brand of modernity; “Many mechanisms of self-control and autonomy, especially those arising from people’s cultural heritage and religion have been pushed out by modernity” (“What Makes”). The Gülen movement offers an alternative to the Kemalist/Western conception of modernity, recognizing “the need for a new and inclusive synthesis arising from the past but based upon universal values and modern realities” (“What Makes”). Though claiming to not want to politicize Islam in any way, he still believes Islam to be a complement to politics. Where that line is drawn is questionable, but it essentially looks to fill the role of morality in Turkish politics, while not explicitly being political. But the relationship with the AKP seems to defy that belief, which is likely due to Gülen believing that Kemalists “did not allocate Islam a place in Turkish Modernization” (Keyman, “Remaking” 157). The extreme secularism of Kemalists is off-putting for many Muslims, either very or moderately conservative, enhancing the appeal of the AKP. Gülen supports Turkey’s mission to join the EU and his apolitical message has had an impact in how its followers reason about Turkish politics; “the Gülen movement can be considered to provide hints for the viability of multiple paths of modernity in the Turkish context” (Keyman, “Remaking” 167).

While not explicitly competing for power domestically, the Gülen movement is characteristic of the current upsetting of the status quo in the conversation around Turkish modernity. His movement has helped to elevate the role of Islam in society, believing it to be an essential and important part of Turkish modernity, which has in turn elevated Islam's role in politics along with promoting the belief that conservative Muslims have a voice. Given the international attention the Gülen movement receives, combined with a sizeable population of adherents numbering in the millions and totaling an estimated 10 percent of the population, it is believed to be the "largest and strongest Islamic community in Turkey," and in the past has supported the AKP in all previous elections (Oberti, Akyeşilmen and Özcan 35). Currently however, its support for the AKP has been revoked due to what the movement's leader has called a "witch-hunt" for its people. Gülen himself claims that "Turkey has now reached a point where democracy and human rights have almost been shelved" (NYT).

This break from previous support is indicative of the AKP's path it has followed since winning its first major national election in 2002. A decade ago, and even five years ago, opinions about the AKP were much different than they are today. Today the debate about the AKP is vastly different than after its first election, though as with Kemalism, it depends on whose opinions you ask whether the direction is right or wrong. The AKP's continued neoliberal capitalist and EU reforms coupled with sociopolitical changes have led to a Turkey that is currently turbulent, with many worrying about the direction of modernity in their country. However, there is no denying the party's continued popularity despite its controversy. As with Kemalism, it is necessary to follow the AKP's path from inception to the present day to uncover its impact on the conversation of modernity through domestic politics.

AKP EARLY JOURNEY AND IDEOLOGY

The AKP won its first national election in 2002, an incredibly quick success for a party only established the year before. The background of the AKP may be short, but its leaders have deeper and

successful roots. The AKP's origins can be traced to the Welfare Party, the political party ousted by the 'postmodern coup' by the military in 1997 and subsequently constitutionally banned. These same leaders then formed the Virtue Party, a party which met the same fate of violating secularist principles as the previous party (Gurses 647). After the closure of the second party, the group split and formed two separate parties, the Felicity Party, another strongly Islamist party, and the reformist Justice and Development Party, referred to in this study as AKP. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the current President (from 2014) and former Prime Minister of Turkey (from 2003-2014), was a founding member of the AKP and was elected as its first leader (Heper and Toktaş). Erdoğan's political background includes being mayor of Istanbul as a member of the Welfare Party; he was seen as a charismatic politician who believed in democratic principles and wasn't afraid to express his Islamic piety (Heper and Toktaş).

Erdoğan and the other founders of the AKP recognized the secularist foundation they were up against, and understood that to be successful and keep the party open they would need to scale back their identity as an Islamist party. This change in identity manifested itself in almost a wholesale change of what a typical Islamist party in Turkey looks like. It is clear that the AKP leadership recognized "a key lesson learned from the 28 February process [1997 postmodern coup] was to avoid hardened ideological positions" (Patton 343). The party completely adapted itself to a new image, rejecting the Islamist title, but still acknowledging the members' roots as conservative Muslims. The AKP defined itself as a "center-right party with a conservative-democrat identity" (Keyman, "Modernization" 315).

The AKP's downplaying of the party's Islamic roots served three important practical purposes; "First, it shielded the party from the likelihood of imminent closure; second, it safeguarded an Islamic lifestyle under the rubric of democratic freedoms; and third, it broadened the party's appeal to liberal-minded voters" (Patton 343). The party's stance ensured its survival against the Kemalist secular guard but also broadened its voter base by not marketing itself as an openly Islamic party. But apart from

simply marketing, the AKP also took very different ideological positions than was typical of most Islamist parties.

Before the AKP, Islamist parties could be characterized by their rejection of the West, but the AKP represented a clear break with this previous Islamist thinking. The AKP espoused the principles of democracy and human rights, ideas which had previously “been despised as prime examples of Western concepts that had allegedly adulterated sound Islamic political thought” (Grigoriadis 111). Through this adoption of liberal concepts from an Islamist point of view, the AKP was rewriting the modernity script in Turkey;

“The adoption of these principles of modernity resulted in a paradoxical situation whereby former Islamist intellectuals were defending human rights and democracy, pointing to the shortcomings of the Kemalist modernization project, which, despite professing modernity, had failed to deliver its biggest blessings” (Grigoriadis 114).

The AKP was reaching out to the pious Muslim population with a new message, criticizing the nature of Turkish secularism through the language of democracy and human rights, embracing these concepts of Western modernity for their own use (Grigoriadis 111). The AKP was adapting a Kemalist strategy by focusing on the connection between Western concepts and modernity, but altering the very definition of modernity for their use to allow for Islamic values and freedom from the harsh suppression of Turkish secularism. In fact, the current AKP Party Platform states that it views “the attitudes and practices which disturb pious people, and which discriminate them due to their religious lives and preferences, as anti-democratic and in contradiction to human rights and freedoms” (*AKParti*). This statement is a clear example of the AKP’s use of the Western oriented modernity concepts of democracy and human rights in reference to pious individuals, clearly alluding to the suppression and “discrimination” of this group by the secular Turkish state.

It is important to note upfront, that for the purposes of this paper, the AKP is still identified as an Islamist party. While the party itself has rejected that title, it remains Islamist in comparison to the

typical secular-based and secular promoting parties found in Turkey. Its policy preferences and actions also support this identification. While the party itself may prefer the conservative-democracy title, there is no denying its religious connection, therefore making it an Islamist party within the secular status-quo of Turkey.

The AKP recognized that Turkish society's modernity is based on westernization. The AKP wanted to continue on this path of westernization, but by altering the definition of modernity. For the AKP, Turkey's modernity is based economically and democratically, and through joining the EU and making appropriate reforms. The biggest difference is that Turkish society itself should be based on Islamic values. The AKP, while being a reformist Islamist party, desires to change the private/public religious relationship by openly acknowledging and utilizing Islam as a social foundation, which is quite contrary to Kemalism's strict secular foundation. The AKP uses the EU to enact a sense of continuity with Kemalist ideas, still using Western ideas as a benchmark of modernity, but by promoting the idea that Islam *can* be modern, and *should* be an essential component to Turkish modernity.

The AKP essentially reinvented the Turkish conception of modernity, promoting the idea that "traditional Muslim piety and a commitment to Western democratic ideals are not incompatible" (Danforth). This makes it clear that Turkey can have multiple modernities, but affirming the belief that modernity itself is a malleable concept that can work as a tool utilized for political gain. The connotations that modernity carries in Turkey are usually far from being associated with Islamist parties, but the AKP managed to effectively formulate and promote a distinctive vision that widened the appeal to a new kind of religious voter.

During the 1980's, the military rule ushered in much needed (and required for IMF loans) neoliberal reforms. These reforms created a new middle class that was more visible and vocal, and wanted representation that matched their Islamic values but also met their economic interests; "Capital

accumulation by religiously conservative business actors began to translate into distinct political power in the 1990s with the rise of conservative parties with roots in political Islam” (Ozel 1096). The traditional anti-Western Islamist parties may have met one criteria, but their rejection of Western interests hurt Western-based connections and support and harmed political stability, therefore making them bad for business. But the importance of religious conservatism overcomes business interests, particularly as Turkey’s economic landscape had particular cultural changes for the Anatolian-based new middle class; “the expansion of the economy has brought yet another set of actors among whom...Islam prevails as a carrier of cultural conservatism that safeguards the rigid walls of the traditional family” (Birtek and Toprak 199). Wanting to maintain their conservative culture, Islamist parties gained importance among this newly wealthy, but socially traditional group. The arrival of the AKP ushered in the new belief that Western economic policies and democratic ideas were not bad, and in fact, they could be used to better the position of Turkey’s more conservative Muslims by fighting back against the secular state that represses them.

The AKP’s vision consists of an “ideological system [based] on Islamic values and principles while retaining the political project of modernity, democracy being its major manifestation” (Bazzi 106,107). And this ideology and promotion turned out to be a winning formula. In their first national election in 2002 the party won with 34 percent of the total vote, a truly impressive number in Turkish politics (Blad and Koçer 51). This success allowed the AKP to lead a single-party government, the first in over ten years (Patton). The AKP’s new language of modernity and focus towards the West attracted much more support than the traditional Islamist Felicity Party (founded in the split of the Virtue Party leaders that also gave way to the AKP) which only gained 2.5 percent of the votes in the 2002 elections. This result led to 0 seats in parliament for Felicity Party while the AKP won 365, making the AKP’s Islamism the obviously more popular and subsequently the most dominant Islamist view (Grigoriadis 111).

The focus on the relationship between AKP and Islam is essential to grasping its popularity, as its repeated re-elections prove it is true a force to be reckoned with. But this relationship, especially in the beginning, could only carry the AKP so far, and it is important to recognize that its votes likely came from a much wider base than the traditional Islamist pool. The AKP promoted itself to vast segments of society, utilizing familiar terms in a new way to emphasize the role that the AKP planned to take was going to be different than other parties in Turkey's history. The party's Political vision states that they have "opted for a new type of politics by predicating her civilizational values and thus has introduced a different type of political vein in Turkish politics" (*AKParti*). This illustrates that the AKP bases its politics around the uniqueness of its "civilizational values," meaning its Turkish (read Ottoman) Muslim society. This is a perspective quite different than the Kemalist vision, though still utilizing the connection to "civilization," a term Atatürk often used when referencing concepts of modernity and the West. The AKP also claimed that among its competition, it was the best choice for "the transformation of Turkey in a globalizing world" (Keyman, "Modernization" 315). It endorsed its leadership as the only group capable of making true, modern changes for the betterment of Turkey and its citizens.

It was the focus of the AKP on Turkey's reforms that enabled it to gain so much popularity. The AKP recognized the potential of the Turkish project of modernity, and altered it to serve their needs. Through focusing on the changing world around Turkey, the AKP wanted to change Turkey to meet these global challenges, while also utilizing its natural strengths (read: Islam). The AKP utilized the same discussion of reform and change to firmly situate itself politically, tailoring its message to reach a broad audience. Even the way that the AKP refers to itself, its dismissal of an Islamist association and the new creative way it marketed its ideology was calculated to challenge a narrowing of its political scope or goals. The very idea of the AKP's 'conservative democracy' "borrows from traditional Kemalism, rejecting 'interest' politics and claiming to represent the whole nation," evidence of an attempt to market to an audience outside of the typical Islamist scope (Glyptis, "Kemalism" 243). Glyptis, though,

acknowledges that of course, politics is still politics; “Conservative democracy is not an ideology, it is a survival guide, as the AKP is determined to carry out ‘reforms of a revolutionary nature’” (Kemalism 243,244). Painting itself in the image of Atatürk is an interesting political move, but one that certainly achieves the goal of attracting voters who may fall under the Kemalist camp, but feel disconnected from the current opposition party leadership offerings.

Through various presentation methods, the AKP loosely connected itself to the ready-made mindset of Kemalism, espousing that its goal was to revolutionize society and essentially finally bring Turkey to modernity. The AKP has taken control of a very Turkish way of thinking and utilized it for the advancement of their cause. The AKP was essentially claiming to complete the path to modernity and make Turkey a democratic society with a strong economy that will finally join the ranks of the West in the EU. This is how the AKP has successfully fused “Islamic ethics and western modernity.” For the first time, an Islamist party in Turkey established a new way of resolving Turkish culture based in religion, with Western concepts of political and economic modernity; “the AKP is blending western standards – elevated to the level of universality – and Islam, understood as a distinct source of culture in Turkey” (Atasoy 106).

One of the key components of modernity in Kemalism is secularism, but for the AKP, this is seen as an impediment to modernity. The AKP sees modernity as allowing for a more open outlook on religion, and uses the potential for Western ideas to free Islam from Kemalist suppression. Kösebalaban summarizes the AKP’s response as almost a natural reaction against Kemalist dominance;

“Kemalists continue their radical secularist thinking and through their hold on the political establishment continue to impose it on conservative Muslims, forcing the latter to seek and embrace tools, such as the EU membership process, to escape from their grip” (92).

The AKP has utilized modernity, of which the EU membership process is its main manifestation, against the Kemalist establishment. The AKP is taking the same tools used in the sustainment of Kemalism, reinterpreting them, and employing them for their own political gain in spite of Kemalists.

Though the AKP uses Kemalist lines of thought as political strategies, this does not mean that the party actually supports or believes in many Kemalist concepts. The AKP campaigned that it would function within the secular state, but it still openly stated that it wanted to open the conversation on religion in Turkey. To free conservative Muslims, Islamists have adopted and promoted the values of Western modernity. But instead of adopting the same modernity theorized in Kemalism, Islamists have “re-conceptualized modernity through a discourse of democracy and human rights, enabling them to articulate their spiritual needs *as* such rights and to renegotiate secularism within a democratic framework” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 209). The AKP is utilizing these Western concepts to alter its position within Turkey.

Another important platform of the AKP, and demonstration of its Western-oriented goals lies within its beliefs about economic reform. The AKP’s economic ideas helped the party to gain traction coming on the heels of a Turkish economic crisis in 2001. The AKP’s economic goals were to continue with neoliberal reforms that they believed were necessary for the stabilization and growth of the economy. Though they promoted these reforms that shed state responsibility, the AKP recognized that certain effects may harm some individuals, but still focused on this same issue to make its case for why it is needed, and how it would be different under their leadership.

The AKP has openly acknowledged the issue of deepening inequality in Turkey and promised to remedy the sources that have created the poverty, inequality, unemployment, and reliance on an informal economy that a sizeable amount of the population is experiencing (Atasoy 109). Though it seems counterintuitive that the AKP would support neoliberal reforms, while using the population’s

mass dissatisfaction stemming from previous neoliberal reforms, the difference (and reason for success) lies in its method. The AKP has promoted a type of new social contract in Turkey, essentially its goal is “the creation and maintenance of trust between the state and citizens,” which reinforces its program “on human welfare, individual freedom, and social justice” (Atasoy 110). The AKP, through their politically reserved but yet open relationship with Islam puts an emphasis on trust that “is culturally embedded in the reciprocity of moral obligations and expectations” (Atasoy 110). This type of thinking is foreign to Kemalism and not a prevalent component of Turkish politics. Kemalism lacks a moral reasoning in rule, and the relationship is far from reciprocal: it is the ‘father state.’ The AKP utilizes the economy as the state’s obligation (their part in the reciprocity deal). They believe that with a sound economy, citizens will be able to better themselves thanks to their Islamic ‘human capital’ (a concept borrowed from the Gülen Movement); “Through self-reliance and self-discipline, individuals endowed with an Islamic ethos and morality would be able to fully manage their position in society” (Atasoy 111). The AKP operates under the assumption that a more democratic system creates better opportunities for individuals (Atasoy 111). Not only is the focus on the individual completely foreign to Kemalism, but it is the focus on the individual which has provided the AKP the legitimacy it required to utilize societal discomfort with neoliberal reforms to turn around and utilize that discomfort to promote the same but more extensive neoliberal reforms in the country.

The way that the AKP utilizes Islam in its message while promoting neoliberal reforms ties into the promotion of the concept that those in society who are able, will take care of those who need help. The AKP places the importance of civil society over that of the state (Dönmez). For the AKP, philanthropy is an essential part of promoting justice in society, as well as playing a “crucial role in the process of the AKP’s attempt to enlarge and depend its links with societal groups at large” (Keyman, “Modernization” 316). This emphasis on providing for the poor establishes a moral foundation based on Islam, while still being able to follow through with neoliberal reforms that could still be damaging to

some members of society. AKP leaders believe that the state is not the most important player. Should an individual need help, their Islamic community is there and will care for that individual (though the AKP and their business and social connections are a part of that community). The AKP's economic policies have been popular due to their religious, moral, and cultural values, specifically through using "religion as a socio-political entity that perceives Islam as an asset of civil society and an instrument to control the public sphere" (Dönmez 369).

The AKP relies on its incredibly successful local governments as well as non-governmental organizations to support its Islamic community mission. The AKP's success can be directly related to its ability to connect different organizations "by using religion as an effective mechanism of mutual trust and association" (Dönmez 370). And through being open to connections with Islamic centered business of charitable groups (which are plenty), these new ties have helped to displace the firm hold of Kemalist-centered organizations (Dönmez 370).

Also acting to loosen the grip of Kemalist thought in Turkish society was the AKP's commitment to having Turkey join the EU. The promotion of EU membership represented a clear break with previous Islamist parties, but at the same time was a continuation down a path that Turkey had already started. The AKP wholeheartedly embraced the EU as an essential goal for Turkey. This was as much a political move as it was ideological. Promoting EU membership would broaden its appeal to a wider voter audience, but the EU also formed the backbone of the AKP's appeal to modernity. Within this appeal to modernity was the idea that the EU could finally deliver Turkey to its deserved place. It would finally be democratic with a modern economy. The AKP marketed its appeal for the EU in a way that drew clear parallels between how EU-based modernity in Turkey would look versus the current situation, which the AKP essentially marketed as not modern; it is undemocratic and suppressing of human rights.

By painting the current state as oppressive, the AKP successfully promoted the EU as a provider of protection for disadvantaged populations, including Islamists as well as other cultural minorities such as Kurds or Alevis. This further widens the voter base attracted to the AKP through the focus of one goal; “The party’s defense of negative freedoms (that limit state power) and societal pluralism has enabled it to appeal successfully both to a pro-Islamism constituency and to cosmopolitan liberal voters” (Patton 343). These cosmopolitan voters who may have otherwise voted for the CHP, Atatürk’s traditional Kemalist party, or other parties could have been attracted to the AKP for its promotion of the EU (Patton). Focusing on the non-Islamists who were drawn to the AKP, it is important to recognize that while EU reforms were already being negotiated under the current broad coalition government during the AKP’s first election, the traditional Kemalist or nationalist focused groups were actually not generally very supportive of Turkey joining the EU (though the military was pro-EU). While specific problems areas will be addressed, the general argument was that EU membership would undermine Kemalist nationalism “by assaulting national sovereignty and integrity” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 222). But more importantly, the main argument that forced Kemalists to withhold support on the EU has to do with national security. Atatürk’s firm nationalism was meant to hold the nation together, but the EU’s requirement of certain human rights initiatives would work to recognize and therefore conclusively affirm that there are ethnic and religious differences in Turkey, creating a situation that many Kemalists fear would jeopardize Turkey’s territorial integrity. Specifically, there is the concern that “the EU makes demands and puts pressure on Turkey without taking its realities, needs and interests into account, thus jeopardizing its unitary structure and territorial integrity” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 235). While that is the alarm, many Turkish citizens, especially during the AKP’s first election, still believed deeply in Turkey becoming an EU member, despite what some of the Kemalist elite argued.

Apart from the territorial question, the major concern of Kemalists about unity is in reference to Islamists. The state’s strong support of secularism is read by the AKP as suppression of the rights of

religious individuals. And in this conflict, the AKP was able to find an alternative to the typical Kemalist authoritarian status quo; “Drawing on the de facto legitimacy of EU accession – itself pursued in Atatürk’s name – Erdoğan seeks to renegotiate secularism” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 181). While secularism specifically refers to religion, the state’s strict relationship with secularism is representative of its overall oppressive tendencies. For the remedy of these issues, the AKP constantly referred to the need for Turkey to become democratic, and the EU membership goals filled the need for Turkey’s democracy and modernity requirements as envisioned by the AKP.

The AKP promoted democracy that it knew it needed. The AKP did not want to meet the same fate as its predecessors and as a new party promoting a reformist version of Islam, it needed to ensure it would not be closed by the constitutional court for anti-secular political activities. The EU, beacon of democracy and modernity was the ticket for political survival and legitimacy (Saatçioğlu). The AKP’s version of Islam was understated yet still understood by the religiously conservative population that it was targeted towards. The answer to gaining more votes was in reaching a wider audience, and nothing could fit more easily with the AKP’s promotion of neoliberal economics and democracy than the EU; “Europeanization would allow the AKP to expand its electoral support base towards the center and thus improve its vote share” (Saatçioğlu 91). Those who questioned the AKP’s version of political Islam were faced with the party’s “compatibility with European liberal democratic values,” creating a seemingly abnormal relationship, yet one that provided validity for their direction as well-suited to the Turkish state’s goals (Saatçioğlu 91).

Mehmet Gurses examined the connection between democracy and Islamists after another successful election for the AKP in 2007. His analysis of public opinion indicated “that a positive relationship exists between being a religious person and having a favourable attitude towards democracy, defined in terms of protecting people’s liberties against oppression.” Gurses does little in the way of drawing conclusions from this data, but it is telling of a link that the AKP exploited for its

political promotion. While Kemalists fear that Islamists would be harmful for Turkey, reverting to a type of authoritarian Islamic Dark Age, Islamists are wanted in power by religious people because they feel they are more likely to have their democratic rights respected. They believe that as religious individuals, the Turkish state was oppressive of their rights. The AKP utilized this concept in promoting the importance of democracy, essentially making the claim that unlike Kemalists, the AKP believes in democracy and individual liberties.

The AKP's use of democracy and human rights in the form of EU modernity gave its reform programs legitimacy, and so "The AKP has made its political survival contingent on the EU integration process" (Patton 343). By promoting Turkey's EU bid, the AKP seized the idea of westernization from its monopoly by Kemalists and were able to use it as their foundation for making major changes within Turkey (Grigoriadis 112). The AKP's "Opting for the thoroughly Kemalist path of a 'revolution from above,'" allowed them to implement changes that would be likely not be tolerated if they weren't done in the name of EU accession (Glyptis, "Kemalism" 244). Though the AKP's embracing of this Western idea of modernity through the EU allowed them to differentiate themselves as a center-right party and not an Islamism party, there was talk at the beginning about their true motives. However, these concerns could be dispelled through the watch of the EU, as surely if the AKP planned to make changes to the Turkish state it would be limited by the close eye of the EU.

The EU can be utilized for better electoral chances by "creating an electoral coalition encompassing different societal groups which will benefit from accession," which is exactly what the AKP was able to do (Baudner 926). They ran under the banner of EU-based reforms, and EU membership was seen as beneficial to disadvantaged groups, such as Kurds and even strongly religious individuals as the AKP argued. Some of the secular middle class who found EU membership an essential move for Turkey could also be gathered into the AKP's electoral bloc as well as liberals looking to the EU as a way to avert the oppressive Kemalist regime. Allowing Turkey to be anchored to the EU combined

with more democratic and neoliberal reforms was also very important to the business community, and the AKP also gained votes from some in this group as well (Ozel). It is clear overall that the AKP benefited greatly from their support of the EU in Turkish domestic politics.

Still running under the banner of reform, in 2007, the AKP faced its second national election. In the 2002 election, the AKP won 34% of the vote which was already a remarkable number. The second time around the AKP won 47% of the vote; “the largest share for a single party since the elections of 1957, and it was only the second occasion since 1954, in which the incumbent party significantly increased its vote share in a subsequent election” (Keyman, “Modernization” 314). This was truly an impressive feat. In the most recent 2011 election AKP increased its vote share to 50% (Blad and Koçer 51). It is clear that the AKP’s message has been successful, though it has developed along an interesting path. Keyman summarizes the AKP’s political ideals with its success;

“As a center-right globalist political actor, with proactive, reformist, market-oriented and philanthropic politics, not only has the AKP achieved its electoral hegemony, but it has also developed a strong, convincing claim that it can act as the main actor and carrier of the process of transforming Turkey” (Keyman, “Modernization” 320).

And many transformations Turkey has certainly seen over this period of AKP rule. What these changes mean for Turkey is a big question society is currently asking itself. And the concern over the future of modernity in the country is very real, especially as a new election year is here and social unrest in Turkey has grown.

Contributing to this unrest is the fact that with the highest turnout since 1987 with an 87% voter participation rate in the last election, though nearly 50% of Turkey voted for the AKP, there was essentially another half of the country that placed their votes elsewhere (“Turkish Elections”). And while this proves the popularity of the AKP, it is important to understand the extreme differences that have developed between the half of society that wants AKP rule and the other half which does not. The continued electoral supremacy of the AKP contributes to these social issues. When the AKP continued

to earn almost half of the votes in two subsequent national elections after first coming to power, each success solidified their ruling presence, but more importantly, it further marginalized the opposition parties. As Keyman observes, “it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the opposition parties to gain electoral success and govern Turkey, which leads to the increasing pessimism and frustration of their voters about their identity, status, and position in society” (“Modernization” 314). The AKP’s electoral dominance makes it so the opposition parties “have no claim to win the elections in a convincing way, but also, and more importantly, the supporters of these parties lose their faith in their own parties’ electoral success” (Keyman, “Modernization” 314,315). AKP dominance is clearly good for the AKP and its supporters, but it has created a situation that does nothing to help calm the tense atmosphere of division in Turkish politics that has now unequivocally affected society.

Even the mere mention of the AKP elicits very passionate reactions among some in Turkish society. Its dominance makes Kemalist oriented individuals feel as if there is no escape from their tyranny, and that they are actively and purposefully diminishing Turkey’s progress towards modernity as they define it. Its success and policies have not only generated “powerful social and political polarizations within political and civil society and institutional clashes between state elite and government,” but have created deep fissures among citizens leading to very public hostilities (Keyman, “Modernization” 315). There is no denying that “the more the AKP becomes the dominant actor of Turkey’s recent transformation, the more it has been subject to criticism, skepticism and reaction, leading to... societal polarization” (Keyman, “Modernization” 323). While the AKP’s origins may have been relatively regular, its current strength, its unusual journey, and its position as the source of much anger and anxiety among some and yet pride and gratitude from others has proven its impact on Turkish politics and the concept of modernity in Turkey will have lasting impacts on society.

TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Since the inception of the AKP, the party has had the ability to use an important invention of modernity in a way that has deeply impacted their time in power and which they have benefitted greatly from: the EU. Where Kemalists may have seen the EU as an important step towards finally achieving modernity, they also viewed it with inherent suspicion. Striving towards the West, what can be considered as modernization as self-defense, has always been a Kemalist goal. This helps to explain and perpetuate the fear of Western powers working to divide and harm Turkey is also a natural component of Kemalist thought (Demir). Joining the EU would require changes and sacrifices that Kemalists were warming up to, but not fully ready to embrace. The AKP on the other hand, used the EU as campaign piece, making it clear from the outset that joining the EU was a goal for the party and an important step for Turkey.

EU membership “would offer Turkey the means and support to complete its modernization project and reach the level of contemporary civilization,” finally achieving Atatürk’s dream. But the leadership of the AKP in taking Turkey to the EU illustrates an interesting deviation in Atatürk’s plan. Not only is Turkey being led to the EU by an Islamist party, but his own supporters, followers of what is widely believed to be the ideology of their long-passed leader (though severely transformed) are not particularly supportive of this plan. But this predicament also represents the duality of the EU, its meaning has always caused confliction in Turkey;

“The EU is both a threat and an opportunity, the object of both admiration and profound mistrust. Does it represent the West that Atatürk warned his children against? Or does it represent progress; a force Atatürk believed could be neither resisted nor negotiated?” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 218)

This mindset explains the long and more recently, in some ways changing, path of progress and public opinion of Turkey concerning the EU. Turkey has long wanted to join the EU for many reasons, the most important of which may be that Turkey wants to solidify its belief that it is and has always been “of

Europe.” Yet when it seemed that the EU was finally within reach, things have taken a different turn, and Turkey’s journey over the past several decades has left it at an interesting, confounding place.

The domestic politics of Turkey are complex, and the EU has compounded this situation by (inadvertently) highlighting the divisions in society, asking for reforms that question the very nature of the Turkish state, and by “taking sides” with a party that is currently equally loved and deeply distrusted. The role of the EU has done more than raise concerns over national sovereignty and integrity, causing many to wonder; “Is the pursuit of EU membership forwarding westernization at the expense of Kemalist nationalism?” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 222). Have the changes that Turkey has undergone in the name of the EU worth the price of the disruption it has created? And now that the AKP has achieved and maintained hegemony, due in great part to its EU connection, and passed many social and structural changes that have fundamentally challenged Kemalism, the very meaning of modernity in Turkey has been questioned. Kemalist modernity is alive, but it is struggling against a new modernity that allows religion to play a bigger role in society and government, a conception that was supported by employing the values that the EU represents. The AKP and the EU have created a crossroads for modernity in Turkey, and only in tracing the journey can Turkey’s current position be understood.

A PERFECT PAIR? THE AKP AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Within the conversation of modernity, the EU represents an important paradigm. The AKP has presented itself as concerned with Turkey’s modernity, and has chosen to develop this direction through the association of the EU. Western economic reforms and democracy are the AKP’s definition of modernity which it has manifested itself in the party’s EU dream. But placing the AKP’s modernity, and therefore their goals for Turkish modernity, into the EU is not a new concept. This of course follows Atatürk’s westernization as modernization model, but the EU is a new, formal organization that effectively exports the pertinent European values to those wishing to join its exclusive club. The EU has

shaped itself as the dominant normative power, using its organization as an "opportunity to impose its conception of modernity and development through accession; modernity 'legitimated around a collective identity based on liberal norms of capitalist democracy'" (Kaliber 31). Europeanization through the EU allows for a new development in modernity, one that necessitates "transition from a state-centric monolithic modernization to a more pluralistic, inclusive, and participatory paradigm" (Kaliber 32).

The AKP effectively adapted this strategy to suit their domestic political needs, creating a new notion of Turkish modernity. The use of the EU as a tool in domestic politics is not certainly not new with Turkey, and the general desire to be a part of the EU while recognizing its inherent flaws and negative perceptions is well utilized by accession candidates and members alike. For candidate countries though, domestic actors who support the EU can "use opportunities and constraints emerging from Europeanization at the expense of their rivals" (Kaliber 34). The AKP understood that the EU would help them achieve power domestically while also directing their reform goals to be manifested within the accession processes of the EU. This allowed them to make changes in the name of reform while also reflecting the problems or negativity of those changes back onto the EU and away from the party.

In 2004 Erdoğan gave a speech at Oxford arguing that Turkey had made significant progress at EU harmonization and "despite some failures and delays, he declared Turkey to be ready and eager to join" (Glyptis, "Rapprochement" 402). At another point Erdoğan stated that the Copenhagen criteria should be called the 'Ankara criteria,' highlighting the importance of the reforms for Turkey itself. Erdoğan's use of the "Ankara Plan" idea was essentially saying that Turkey's current reform process "is important in itself and should not be overly dependent on the ambition to become a full EU member" (Öniş 366). Glyptis argues that Turkey's membership quest will require that "the normative core of political activity and institutions in Turkey...need not simply to adapt but radically change"

(“Rapprochement” 402). And in the early years of the AKP along with Erdoğan’s speeches, it seems as though the AKP recognized this fact. Not only did the EU represent a chance for domestic political power, but also an opportunity to fundamentally change the structure of the Turkish state through EU reforms.

The AKP began its fundamental changes early, “launching four harmonization packages and adopting constitutional amendments until 2004” (G. Yilmaz 305). These initial reforms focused on increasing democracy, specifically focusing on freedom of speech and civil-military relations (G. Yilmaz). These reform packages were fueled in part by the AKP’s relative power position in government. After the AKP’s 2002 elections, they had a two-thirds majority which allowed them to “motion constitutional amendments as a single party” (Kalaycıoğlu 276). Their situation allowed them to essentially act freely (within reason to public opinion and sights for future dominance, of course). Not needing to seek compromises with other parliamentary groups, the AKP “won the potential to act alone in projecting its own priorities and vision” into constitutional amendments (Kalaycıoğlu 276). For a party advocating major reform, Turkey’s odd electoral system created a dream situation for the AKP, one that allowed them the freedom and ability to push through legislation to achieve their EU goals.

Oniş refers to the Turkey-EU golden age as occurring from the summer of 2002, which includes the reform package passed from the coalition government before the AKP came to power, up until October 2005, when the official accession negotiations began (363). This “golden age” conception coincides with the early years of the AKP, but its timeline is regularly adopted by those examining the EU-Turkey relationship which commonly neglects the important work done before the AKP came to power. Coalition work to meet the EU Copenhagen Criteria had already resulted in several constitutional amendments before the AKP, including a highly comprehensive set of amendments in 2001 (Kalaycıoğlu 271). The 34 articles that were amended at this time improved human rights, restructured democratic institutions, and strengthened rule of law (Glyptis, “Rapprochement” 402). The

Turkish government had proven its willingness to work together to make changes, and so the AKP was not starting from the beginning, nor were its ideas for reform radical. Rather it was its belief that the Turkish state as a whole needed radical transformation was the new and drastic notion (and by extension, the Kemalist structures and thinking that upheld the current status quo).

And while it is true that the AKP initially made many reforms towards EU requirements, it is clear by the present relationship between the AKP and the EU that the situation is currently much different. The AKP's enthusiasm for EU reforms "slowed perceptibly in 2005 and noticeably in 2006 as contraindications of a willingness to stand behind the reforms attracted commentary from international and local observers" (Patton 340). Of course the AKP had the power to push forward EU reforms if it wished, but it is important to acknowledge the general shift in overall opinion in Turkey towards the EU, and as a political actor, it of course must respond to domestic outlook. This is important in understanding the connection between the AKP and the reforms it has promoted before and since this period in which EU enthusiasm lessened.

There are two main arguments typically cited for the change in attitude by Turkey, led by the AKP, about EU membership. Both issues concern the EU's concept of conditionality, which is the general process by which the EU influences states' actions in exchange for the reward of membership. For Turkey, the struggle is with the legitimacy of the EU's reward. The EU was slow to announce Turkey's official candidacy while still accepting ten new candidates for admission in 2004, while deferring two candidates for admission in 2007 (Glyptis, "Rapprochement" 406). At the end of 2004 the EU announced that Turkey's negotiations would begin in October of 2005, yet unlike the previous twelve candidates, the EU failed to provide a timeline for accession. Patton referred to this situation as the EU sending "mixed signals, extending in one hand the carrot of accession talks and waving a stick in the other hand warning that negotiations could be suspended at any time" (344). It was these kinds of mixed signals that fueled the belief that the EU was membership process was simply unfair to Turkey.

According to Patton, it was during this time that “the Turkish public was rapidly convinced by the media that their country was being treated differently from other candidate countries” (344). And there are some issues, particularly surrounding the Cyprus problem, where it could be argued that Turkey was held to a different standard than other countries, and was in fact treated unfairly.

There were also events of Turkish EU membership criticisms coming from EU countries which did little to help quell EU wariness in Turkey. There were serious concerns over whether the EU would really ever let Turkey join. The perceived (and very real, in some cases) ill-treatment stemming from the EU generated “feelings of humiliation and indignation” which helped to fuel a nationalist backlash within Turkey (Patton 345). The EU’s lack of clear membership prospects for Turkey raised concern and suspicion about EU motives. This situation did little to persuade Kemalists to support the EU and it also did not encourage the AKP to maintain EU momentum. The yardstick of Europe that Atatürk had used to measure modernity was seen as essentially saying Turkey was simply not good enough. Turkey felt that the EU was saying it was not “modern” enough, a serious blow to the mindset of many Turks who felt that they had always belonged to Europe and were deserving of membership, even more so than some of the recent countries granted admission to the EU.

Just as the AKP had promoted the EU which had helped provide a political advantage, other parties, particularly the nationalist parties, were quick to use this new situation as fuel against the AKP and the EU. This further enhanced the concerns of more nationalist and Kemalist parties wondering if the concessions Turkey had to make to join the EU were worth the trouble. This only contributed to the conflict surrounding modernity and the role of the EU in the Kemalist and AKP conceptions. For example, the CHP isn’t necessarily anti-EU, “but finds itself uncomfortable with the conditionality associated with a EU membership and the ramifications of the democratization- and reform process” (Öniş 369). The EU represented modernity as a goal to strive for Kemalists, but with the questionable credibility of their membership offer, the EU also represented Turkey’s modernity and strengths without

needing their approval. This was embodied in a sort of nationalist backlash to prove Turkey is modern in spite of the EU, and is fine, if not better, without EU membership.

Overall, the EU fervor in Turkey was allayed during this time, with favorable views of the EU falling from 58% in 2004 to only 27% in 2007. However, support for joining the EU wasn't totally extinguished, with 68% of the population in 2005 still supporting Turkey becoming a member of the EU and only 27% opposed ("Turks Divided"). However, the concerns over EU legitimacy are necessary to take into account when considering the AKP's overall EU relationship and actions done in the name of EU accession. Though the population saw a decline in support for EU membership over the next several years, dropping to 54% supporting Turkey joining the EU 2010 with 40% opposed (with those views being stable through early 2014) the AKP never abandoned it as a main goal for the party. Though it may have backed off from its enthusiasm for some reforms, its continued support and subsequent EU reforms have contributed to a mixed picture of what the AKP's goals are. While it can be argued that the AKP might simply not have made it to the Europeanization stage where it adapted and embodied the EU's goals as its own, Patton sees that there may have been other factors behind its actions; "while social learning requires time, insufficient socialization does not explain why the AKP aggressively pushed reforms for two years and then backed off" (340).

The AKP was successful in making the EU of the focus of their first term in government and continued that push through their second national election, though it ended shortly after that. With the 2007 national elections the AKP earned wider support through their larger percentage of total votes. This represented "a major opportunity for the AKP to revitalize the Europeanization and reform agenda," and follow up on its purported goals of reforms that would bring Turkey closer to the EU (Öniş 366). But this would be a missed opportunity on both sides. The EU failed to demand more reforms or a concerted effort towards accession criteria from the AKP, and the AKP, rather than pushing forward with

further EU reforms, “increasingly shifted towards the promotion of fundamental religious freedoms,” (such as the headscarf issue which will be addressed later) (Öniş 366).

Full Europeanization only works through continued and effective reform; “Domestic changes occurs when the actors holding social and political capital learn and internalize European rules, norms and institutions so as to redefine their identities and interests” (Kaliber 34). And it is clear from Turkey’s current relationship with the EU, that there has been a detectable shift in the overall attitude of the AKP towards EU reforms and membership, and therefore true Europeanization has not happened in Turkey. The AKP, while not totally abandoning the EU project, has minimized its importance, while still continuing to complete EU reforms. The AKP has persisted with “patchy and selective Europeanization” (G. Yilmaz 305). It is the ‘selectiveness’ of the AKP’s reforms that have played a large role in deciphering their true conception of modernity and what ‘radical transformations’ it had in mind for the Turkish state. Baudner has a supportive (and rather lengthy) explanation for why some actors (in this case, the AKP) have a strong reason to attach themselves to the EU;

“Political actors who are systematically disadvantaged by the well-entrenched domestic standard of legitimacy...have strong incentives to embrace the European standard of legitimacy, once three preconditions are fulfilled: European norms must be supportive of the interests of domestic actors; they must offer domestic actors an advantage in the political system of the state in question, or must be perceived to do so; and these actors must also be prepared to accept modifications of the political programme imposed by EU norms, possibly even against the resistance of important parts of the electorate or membership of the party in question” (925).

The AKP met these three conditions as demonstrated through their early journey. The AKP was certainly “systematically disadvantaged” by the military and Kemalist state structure, giving them reason to adopt the EU as an important cause. More importantly, this helps to explain their continued, but minimized, support for the EU while carrying out further selective reforms. This is not to deny that the AKP may have truly believed in EU membership, but it necessary to consider its support for the EU in the context of Turkey’s domestic political situation.

MAJOR EU REFORMS: MINORITIES AND THE MILITARY

The EU has made many requests of Turkey to prepare for accession. The *acquis communautaire* and its 35 chapters contain extensive rules and regulations necessary to adopt to be considered for membership, and some reforms are easier implemented than others. But some of the changes that Turkey needs to make are extensive and structural, possibly taking several rounds of legislation to complete reforms to a level the EU will accept. The reforms Turkey must complete are numerous, but there are several areas that help to highlight the role of the AKP and address the underlying structures that relate to Turkish modernity. Specifically, two of the largest and most important reforms in this area are in regards to Turkey's treatment of their minorities and the transformation of the civilian-military relationship in Turkish government.

Concerning the EU's required reforms concerning minorities, its interests are usually directed at the treatment of Turkey's large Kurdish population. The 1982 Turkish constitution implemented during military rule specifically banned the Kurdish language, including giving Kurdish names to children and renaming Kurdish villages with Turkish names. This sort of cultural and linguistic suppression is not only seen as an infringement upon what the EU considers minority rights, but it also is closely related to the destructive civil war between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish army (Zeydanoğlu 11). This war contributed to the mass movement of more than one million people around and from south and southeast Anatolia and can be blamed for over 40,000 deaths (Keyman, "Rethinking" 468). The reactions over the PKK conflict that has killed Turkish soldiers and civilians (though, along with many Kurdish civilians) has encouraged a severe nationalist backlash centered on Turkishness. This has only deepened the mistrust between Turks and Kurds, creating a situation seemingly without a possible solution. The position of ethnicity at the center of such a bloody conflict is a serious concern of political instability to the EU.

The problem with the recognition of the Kurds is a deep issue going back to the founding of the Republic with the purposeful neglect to identify Kurds as a distinct ethnic group for fear of damaging the new state's territorial integrity. The Kemalist rebuttal for Kurds is usually directed at their traditionalism, the problems impacting the rest of the country are more than simply socioeconomic underdevelopment or separatist terrorism, "It has to do with the difficult question of how to politically organize a multiethnic and multicultural society without endangering the legitimacy of the polity and its state" (Keyman, "Rethinking" 474). Kemalism does not allow for the recognition of Kurds as a separate ethnic group or even a division of Turkish society that should be allowed its own language or culture. Their heightened presence is disruptive to the unity of the state. The EU needs Turkey to recognize the Kurds as a separate, distinct ethnic group that is deserving of equal rights and treatment.

Typically the military has been a supporter of the Kemalist doctrine, but as addressed earlier, the military was for joining the EU and in relation to the Kurdish issue, the military could also be understood as generally supportive. The "EU membership process would provide a framework to deal with the Kurdish issue" which would remove the military from making decisions concerning Kurds and place the responsibility with politicians who, especially when working with the legitimacy of the EU, could likely resolve the issue in a way that would be too politically unpopular to do otherwise (Ersel, Özcan, and Dogan 7). The military is pragmatic in their view of the Kurdish issue, concerning themselves with internal security, but also acknowledging their role the ones responsible in the event of further military conflict. Regardless of which party anyone in Turkey sides with, there is no denying that the situation needs a solution.

Placing the solution in the hands of the EU seems the only means for achieving a solution of any kind. The AKP, promoting the necessity of EU membership, is actually the only group likely capable of being able to establish such reforms due to the fact that its party platform doesn't rest on the nationalist beliefs held by other popular parties. However, regardless of the absence of promoting the

typical nationalist fervor, it does not mean that providing an answer to the “Kurdish problem” is completely politically salient or easy for the AKP. Like most Turks, the AKP is distrustful of the Kurds and not willing to easily hand over rights. Though a solution may be politically unpopular with Turks, the EU was still something that many wanted. It is certainly popular with Kurds as it would provide them with the rights they have been fighting for, which could prove as a solution that actually protects territorial integrity as they would have less of a push to claim their own land if they were simply treated as equal citizens.

Under the prodding of the EU, the AKP did initiate a “democratic opening” process to enlarge the rights and freedoms of Kurds, whose implementation covers the areas of education, media, and culture” (Keyman, “Rethinking” 474,475). Specifically, in a 2004 reform package the Kurdish language was again allowed to be used in public as well as in educational settings where it could be taught (though not for use in state schools) (Baudner, Patton). This package also included a provision that granted permission for limited television broadcasting in Kurdish (Baudner 932).

In relation to the concerns that Turkey has been treated unfairly in the accession process, the treatment of minorities is certainly a sensitive area. Turkey’s concerns about the Kurds is in regard to territorial integrity, a concern that is shared by some EU members and their own numerous minority groups (Tasch 44). But current members are not subject to the same strict protocol as candidates, and such a concern is likely to remain, the EU wanting to ensure that it upholds the human rights values it claims to value strongly. But in this case the EU truly does represent a solution to a problem that has otherwise been seen as unfixable in the Turkish context. Politically, it is unpopular to discuss giving Kurds more rights, but the AKP did take small steps to fulfill EU requirements, although minimally only through the reforms discussed above. The AKP could benefit politically from better relationships with Kurds, but while they have metaphorically kept the door open for further reforms, more changes have not been forthcoming. After the initial reform package that addressed minority rights (much like in

other areas), the AKP has not produced any further major expansion of rights, and it has continued to remain a topic of domestic political contention where any major concessions would now likely be very unpopular.

The reforms regarding the military in Turkey are certainly the most complex due to the position of the military in the government and political system. The EU's expectation was that the military be brought under civilian control to meet the standards of liberal democracy as seen in Europe in the same civil-military relationship area. The altering of the military's deeply embedded relationship with the state started in 1999 when the Turkish government began focusing on deeper EU reforms aimed at democracy (Ersel, Özcan, and Dogan). This process has taken many levels of reforms, and it is one area where the AKP has continued to pressure and pass reforms regardless of the status of the existing relationship with the EU. The reforms surrounding the military have wider impacts throughout society, as bringing the military under civilian control alters the position of guardian role that the military has held dear as an essential part of their organization.

To reaffirm the position of the military (as with the Kurdish issue), the military was not anti-EU. The EU represented the epitome of modernity. It would allow the military to be a European army and lead the country to the pinnacle of modernization that Atatürk had wanted. However, the military recognized that "the EU accession process created a situation in which the guardian and vanguard roles of the military contradicted each other" (Gürsoy, "Changing Role" 745). Should the military have rejected the EU, it would have become unpopular due to what was then very large public support for EU membership, and such a move would have also been contradictory to the Western-oriented focus that the military attempted to portray through its coups and state-structured guidance (Gürsoy, "Changing Role" 745). The military recognized that to lead Turkey down the path it saw as best (towards the EU), it would have to relinquish part of its guardian role. In the end, membership in the EU would make the military's guardian role unnecessary for the most part, even though the journey would be difficult and

raise important internal and external security issues for military to learn to deal with in new ways.

Overall, the military “believed that the reform process must be controlled as much as possible so that the armed forces would not lose all of their privileges” (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 745).

EU demands have focused mostly on the National Security Council, and the reforms enacted have since “changed the powers, function and composition of the NSC” (Gürsoy, “Impact” 295). Each reform has essentially peeled back layers of military control in the organization that allowed the military to function “almost as a second pillar of the executive through the NSC, especially in matters of external and internal security” (Gürsoy, “Impact” 295). The first major amendment in 2001 increased the number of civilians in NSC meetings. A much bigger reform package passed in the early years of the AKP in 2003 made the NSC a strictly advisory body, a reversal of power matching the 1961 constitution made after the first military coup. This also allowed the secretary general of the council to be a civilian and moved the power to choose this individual to the Prime Minister with approval from the president. Several other reform components vastly increasing the role of civilians has not only led to a decrease in the military’s power within the body, but also “a decrease in the military’s control over the agenda (Gürsoy, “Impact” 295). In 2004 another reform package allowed civilian supervision over the military’s budget and removed military members from civilian boards including the very significant Council of Higher Education. Other reforms limited the role of the military in the judiciary, which then functioned as another stronghold of Kemalists (Gürsoy, “Impact”). Giving civilians control overall military promotions and dismissals is another example of the type of reforms made in the name of EU accession (Ersel, Özcan, and Dogan).

While all of these moves are essential for Turkey to move towards the liberal democracy that the EU wanted, given Turkey’s unique history and relationship with its military, these changes were very big. The military may have had fears about the AKP when they were first elected; as time continued and their power eroded very quickly, it seemed as if their fears were justified. However, fighting against the

EU reforms still remained difficult due to public opinion and particularly now that they had basically lost their institutional mechanism (the NSC) for controlling government actions (Aknur). However, some senior military members who were against certain reforms utilized informal mechanisms including speeches and statements to try and influence politics (Aknur 137). This period has been categorized by Aknur as a time of “open-conflict” between the AKP and military, but this relationship would soon come to a head over the direction of the state, and the EU reforms would prove the new, subordinate position of the military.

In early 2007, the AKP was gearing up for their second national elections that this time coincided with the end of the President’s term in office. As the AKP had majority control over parliament, the natural expectation would be that the AKP would nominate Prime Minister Erdoğan to the presidency. Unsurprisingly, the military feared the AKP having control over the presidency and the parliament, particularly after its own power had been diminished (Gürsoy, “Impact”). However, the AKP changed their presidential candidate to another party member, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül (Aknur). Still unhappy with this decision, before the parliament could vote, the military issued a declaration through its website, sometimes referred to as the “e-memorandum” or “e-coup” (though very much not a coup). The memorandum stated their concern as “the certain defenders of secularism” and that they would also “openly and clearly put forward their attitudes and behavior when necessary” (Hurriyet qtd. In Gürsoy, “Impact” 296). This statement is clearly a thinly veiled threat against the AKP over the military’s fear of their undermining of secularism. The presidential crisis led to demonstrations against the AKP in Istanbul and Ankara, also promoting the belief that the AKP was a danger to Turkish secularism (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 746). However, there was the general feeling still (even amongst protestors) that a coup was not the solution, proof that Kemalism had possibly been reformed through Europeanization and that even those supporting Kemalist ideas had begun to accept new definitions of what was an acceptable component of Turkish modernity.

Regardless of the e-memorandum the presidential vote still went through and there was no significant military intervention. However, shortly after the vote the Constitutional Court rejected the vote on a technicality. As a result “the AKP called for a new general election to resolve the impasse, and, after renewing its mandate in parliament, the party elected Gül to the presidency” (Gürsoy, “Impact” 296). The outcome of the military’s interference was that the AKP ran another successful campaign espousing the importance of democracy, and was able to use the military as a clear example of how Turkey was still undemocratic. The AKP won almost half of the votes and in the end, the feelings towards the role of the military in Turkey had noticeably shifted (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 746). Feelings of confidence toward the military in Turkey noticeably shifted in public opinion polls after 2007, with people who said they do not have confidence in the military increasing five percentage points in 2008. This trend continued, resulting in lower trust levels for the Turkish military than in EU societies in 2010 when only 69% of people had confidence in the military, down from around 88% in 2007 (Gürsoy, “Public Opinion” 108,109).

After the 2007 elections, the AKP “felt much stronger and more secure about controlling politics and placing pressure on the military” (Aknur 138). Aknur argues that after the failure of the e-memorandum and the AKP’s significant electoral victory that the military moved from open conflict with the AKP to what he calls “silent protest” (139). This period of silent protest was marked by the acceptance that without the NSC, the military had no clear avenue to interrupt the AKP government.

Another blow to the military also occurred during this time. In June 2007 an investigation known as the *Ergenekon* case began. This event led to the trial and some arrests of over 300 people “including journalists, academics and retired and active duty military officers from various ranks” since October of 2008 (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 736). This investigation and subsequent trial concerned alleged coup plots against the AKP government between 2003 and 2004 (Gürsoy, “Impact” 297). This trouble was furthered by another investigation and subsequent trial known as *Balyoz* in early 2010

(Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 736). This trial included around 200 military officers and concerned “conspiracies allegedly planned to manipulate public opinion and the media by carrying out psychological warfare and false flag operations” (Gürsoy, “Impact” 297). The plots were to create chaos in Turkey which would “create favourable conditions for the military to step in and stage a legitimate coup” (Gürsoy, “Impact” 297).

One tenth of the military’s generals and admirals were arrested in the two cases, certainly no small number (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 736). In both of these trials the outcome was that many military officers including several very high ranking officers as well as “journalists, businessmen, ultra-nationalists and representatives of civil society organizations, were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for attempting to plan coups to overthrow the government” (Aknur 139, 140). There was a noticeable backlash against the military in the aftermath of the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials that led to a diminished public opinion about their role in Turkish politics and also resulted in a loss of the military’s informal mechanisms for influence such as speeches and press conferences (Aknur 132). The public opinion of those believing that the military was having a good effect on the country fell from 85% in 2007 to 72% in 2010, and even farther down to 55% in 2014 (“Turks Divided”). These trials have undeniably had a strong impact on how the public feels about the military as a part of society.

However, there have been doubts about the facts surrounding both cases, with some seeing “the only common denominator that brings suspected individuals together is their opposition to the AKP government” (Gürsoy, “Impact” 298). Unreliable evidence produced in the *Ergenekon* case and the *Balyoz* case raised serious doubts about the impartiality and legality of the judiciary (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 750; Aknur 146). While some may have believed in the validity of the cases, for others they “raised doubts about the intentions of the AKP and whether the government is using the allegations to weaken and harm the reputation of the military” (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 736). The EU took notice of these trials in their 2011 and 2012 Progress Reports on Turkey as the trials were nearing completion.

The Reports noted issues such as the general secrecy surrounding the investigations, failure to provide evidence used in indictments, problems surrounding pre-trial detention for the accused, and “excessively long and catch-all indictments” (European Commission 2012 7). The EU concluded it had many concerns over the judicial process, striking a note of irony about the EU’s wishes. Removal of the institutional role of military by the AKP was desired by the EU, but when the AKP overstepped democratic boundaries in the process of the trials, the EU took note to criticize this development. Within Turkey, the cases also had the effect of demonstrating that the AKP had infiltrated and politicized the judiciary which was formerly seen as a Kemalist stronghold (Gürsoy, “Changing Role” 750).

The *Balyoz* case took an interesting turn in March and April 2015 when the almost 300 suspects and remaining defendants were acquitted during a retrial. The retrial was ordered in June 2014 after an extensive purge of the judiciary occurred in early 2014 in an act of “government retaliation” for the exposed corruption scandal involving the AKP and Erdoğan himself. It was ruled that evidence used in the case was fabricated and inadmissible in court. In a speech at the Turkish War Colleges, Erdoğan claimed that the trials and accusation were the product of the “parallel state” within Turkey, referring to the Gülen Movement that has become a very public enemy to the AKP as of late. Claiming he had been deceived, Erdoğan then blamed the case (which concerned coup plots against the AKP government by the military) as an instrument of a *real* coup plan for Turkey orchestrated by the “parallel state” (“Court Acquits”). This turn of events confirms the suspicions surrounding the original trial, but the acquittals and subsequent blame of the Gülen Movement for planning a real coup only deepens concerns about the AKP’s motives and intentions surrounding anyone perceived as an enemy to the party.

Along with these two major cases, the AKP also passed a constitutional amendment package that made it possible to try those responsible for the 1980 and 1997 coups as well (Aknur 140). These reforms went along with other changes aimed at reducing the control and power of the military in several areas including military promotions and moving several areas previously under jurisdiction of

military courts to civilian courts (Gürsoy, "Impact" 293-294). Overall, these episodes seemed to prove that the AKP had a politically motivated commitment to military reform, even as its enthusiasm for other EU reforms waned. It also demonstrates the power that the AKP developed within state structures that formerly favored Kemalism (the judiciary), while taking almost all formal and informal structures of influence away from the traditional Kemalist military.

OTHER AKP INITIATIVES: IS THIS MODERNITY?

Reforms the AKP made in the name of the EU concerning Kurds and the military paint an interesting picture of AKP modernity. It shows they made steps towards enhancing democracy as the EU requested, yet its overall lack of major EU reforms in other areas proves that the AKP "purposefully selects the areas in which it wants to further democratization for its own self-interest" (Gürsoy, "Changing Role" 751). In conjunction with the EU reforms, the AKP's time in power has been characterized by questionable modernity moves; a poor track record on women's rights, an increased government focus on religion, corruption issues, and a decreased freedom of press, among others. On top of this, this AKP also "shows signs of increasing authoritarianism in other areas" (Gürsoy, "Changing Role" 751). Several other important initiatives the AKP passed (or attempted to pass) during this time prove the AKP capable of authoritarian tendencies (just as had the previous Kemalist elite they campaigned against). Some of these amendments illustrate the AKP passing legislation to improve its short term political power and others bring into question the type of modernity the AKP stands for. The AKP generated a new conception of modernity that was based in EU democracy and human rights, though part from the military reforms the AKP failed to make meaningful headway in these areas. It is important to recognize that the military reforms met EU democracy requests but also reflected AKP self-interest, and the AKP's other major reforms for the EU were limited during this time. Other legislation that has been initiated by the AKP raises questions about the party's real conception of modernity and

whether or not they are still serious about EU membership. And if the AKP is no longer concerned with EU membership, what is their conception of modernity outside of the shell of the EU?

Yilmaz argues that after the second national election in 2007, the AKP was able to shift its focus away from the EU; “While the EU accession process provided a strong sense of legitimacy to the rule of the AKP, this has been replaced by the legitimacy provided by popular support in the elections across time” (G. Yilmaz 313). The AKP now acted under the principle that it had earned the right to act as it wanted through its electoral mandate. The EU membership question was still useful for certain domestic political situations, but it won its own legitimacy and now no longer felt the need to rely on the EU as it had in the past, unless of course, it suited domestic political needs. While the following are by no means a full collection of reforms or actions, but they highlight important issues that have contributed to the polarization of Turkish society and politics. These are issues that still play a role in the conversation around AKP and what their conception of modernity is concerning reforms that have little to do with the EU.

Beginning at the period of waning EU enthusiasm, the AKP passed a new penal code in June 2005. Far from improving freedom of speech, this reform “stiffened penalties for the expression of non-violent opinions deemed to insult the nation of harm national interests” (Patton 340). This new code also “fell short of effectively protecting women’s rights particularly with respect to honour killings and virginity testing” (Patton 340). This failure came on the heels of another women’s rights embarrassment at the end of 2004 when “a group of AKP deputies moved an amendment in the criminal code to define adultery as a criminal offence, punishable with a stiff sentence for women” (Kalaycioğlu 273). Such a move elicited a strong response from both the EU and the Council of Europe with Erdoğan “indignantly [telling] the EU not to interfere with Turkey’s internal affairs” (Glyptis, “Rapprochement 415). This type of focus on “protecting the family” is indicative of the party’s Islamist character, and helps to define

what the AKP stands for outside of its profession of support for human rights and democracy within the context of the EU (Glyptis, "Rapprochement 415).

Another change Turkey has seen under the AKP has been an intensified government focus on the importance of religion, a fight against the Kemalist definition of secularism while utilizing the Kemalist tool of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. According to statistics on the organization's official website, the department had around 74,000 staff in 2003, already a number that could be considered significant. But by 2013, after the legislation of 2010 which upgraded and enlarged the office in line with "the requirements of modern management," its staff had risen to number almost 122,000 ("İstatistikler," "Kuruluş"). This is an incredible jump in a decade's time. This is indicative of the importance the government places on this office along with its increasingly visible conservatism. The higher profile of the Presidency of Religious Affairs is only one avenue through which the AKP has worked to promote a greater importance of Islam in Turkish society. In order to satisfy Islamist constituents, the AKP has had to create measures catering to their conservative wishes in order to maintain relevancy over parties that offer a stronger Islamist view. This includes some incidences where AKP-run local governments have attempted to regulate public morality. The specifics have included segregation of men and women at public swimming pools, the banning of "sexually liberal" ads for swimsuits on local billboards, and "the distribution of leaflets promoting a strict Islamist lifestyle," among others. These actions elicited tense backlash in some areas, prompting the national office "to refrain from activities that politicized religion." However, it is likely that such acts continued quietly which helps keep the party popular amongst its grassroots constituency (Patton 348).

More obvious of the conservative religious push concerns the 2008 highly controversial headscarf issue. In early 2008, the AKP passed a constitutional amendment (not within a reform package) that allowed female students to wear headscarves at universities (Öniş). The stand-alone amendment was highly criticized, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs "asserted that Turkey dismissed the

headscarf ban in order to comply with EU norms” (Baudner 930). The party had previously requested the involvement of the European Court of Human Rights in the matter which had not supported the headscarf ban repeal. The EU publicly replied that they had made no such recommendation for the amendment. The CHP brought the matter to the Turkish Constitutional Court which annulled the new amendment lifting the ban. This controversy led to the chief prosecutor of the CHP case calling for the closure of the AKP based on its anti-secular activities, arguing the party’s acts as unconstitutional. However, only ten of eleven judges believed the party to be guilty, allowing the party to avoid closure (Baudner).

The AKP passed several reforms from 2002-2005 and later passed further measures for a national strategy against corruption in 2008 in hopes of satisfying EU accession criteria. These initiatives may showcase impressive work on paper, yet the actual implementation and changes in the state have been minimal and selective (Yılmaz and Soyaltın 14). While corruption has always been a problem in Turkey, the AKP’s EU-oriented corruption reforms seem to be more for show, as “accusations of tolerating corruption and appointing cronies to top jobs are rife” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 242). The AKP is known to use corrupt practices such as bribes and state contracts to maintain their voter base, with the connection between the AKP’s neoliberal business reforms, business votes, and state contracts representing a large part of AKP support. The AKP has done its best to replace the previous Kemalist business connections and punish those who don’t support their policies; “whenever challenged by secular(ist) business groups, the AKP government...opted for distributing state resources to its new allies and incorporating these organizations into policymaking platforms” done at the expense of powerful secular business organizations (Ozel 1096). Again, this is not a unique practice to Turkey, but it is demonstrative of the AKP’s workings towards complete control through a mutual relationship where the state apparatus is utilized to gain and retain votes through patronage and incentives.

The AKP has claimed major corruption reform, but the Freedom in the World organization maintains in its 2015 report that “Corruption remains a major problem in Turkey,” specifically referencing the 2013 corruption allegations surrounding government ministers and the Erdoğan family that were documented through audio recordings released by Fethullah Gülen and his “parallel state” within Turkey that he accused of wanting to take over the government (Freedom in the World 2015: Turkey). The recordings were made available on YouTube, making this scandal material very public and accessible. Erdoğan responded with a mass “reassignment” of over 2,500 judges and prosecutors and 45,000 police officers (Freedom in the World 2015: Turkey). Such a response to a very public corruption accusation has only raised suspicions and concerns about Erdoğan and his AKP government. Clearly these moves, reminiscent of the Kemalist elite, represents a clear failure of the modern reforms the AKP promoted.

After the presidential crisis in 2007, the AKP pushed through another major amendment concerning the way the President of the Republic is elected. This changed the semi-parliamentary regime to a popularly elected president. Advocated by the AKP as being done to avoid a similar situation to the Gül fiasco in the future, which resulted in the e-memorandum conflict between the AKP and the military, Kalaycıoğlu sees the change differently; “such a shift in regime character has more to do with the power struggle between the AKP and the opposition than with the quality of representative democracy in Turkey” (268). This issue is important as Erdoğan became Turkey’s first directly elected president in 2014, and has pushed for further changes to Turkey’s political structure that would only increase his power as president, advocating for Turkey’s move from a parliamentary system to a presidential system (Beki). This change would give Erdoğan more legal power and enhance his political control. Erdoğan’s brief tenure in the presidency so far has already raised certain democratic issues; the Turkish constitution requires that the President not be connected to any political party, and Erdoğan has still remained the de-facto leader of the AKP (K. Kaya).

Erdoğan's increasingly authoritarian tendencies before and since his election to the presidency have led to numerous comparisons to Putin and others believing that he is attempting to "build a regime according to his wishes...being himself a mix of an Ottoman sultan and a republican president" (Sadar, Vatandaş). Kalaycıoğlu has also expressed concerns over Turkey's direction under Erdoğan, citing the potential outcomes such as;

"copying and pasting an "autogolpe," experienced painfully in Peru because of former President Alberto Fujimori; a "delegative democracy," as in Venezuela under former President Hugo Chavez; or "competitive authoritarianism," symbolized by Russian President Vladimir Putin" (qtd. In Baydar).

Any of these outcomes would be a serious reversal in modernity. Proving that while still popular, Erdoğan's actions have led him and the AKP to be interpreted as operating far from the EU (or any) conception of modernity that respects democracy.

Through a combination of legislation, speeches, government actions and priorities, the rule of the AKP has also led to other important events and societal changes. Like with corruption, Turkey has always had issues with freedom of press. However, in the past few years the situation in Turkey has gotten much worse in this area; "the independence, impartiality and quality of media in Turkey still remains low" (G. Yilmaz 311). In 2015 Turkey was ranked 149 out of 180 countries in the Reporters without Borders World Press Freedom Index, achieving only a slight improvement after the previous 3 years at 154. The modest change only came after the release of 40 imprisoned journalists in 2014, but Reporters without Borders still concluded that "the freedom of information continues to decline." By comparison, Turkey's score in 2005 and 2006 was 98 out of 161 respectively, early in the period of AKP rule. How the state treats its media is telling of the status of modern society; "Freedom of the press is a benchmark for freedom of thought and speech, which are themselves hallmarks of the democratic freedoms that are the bedrock of modernity" (I. Kaya 205). Because of the deteriorating freedom of press and speech issues in Turkey, self-censorship is rampant and those who dare insult Erdoğan are

increasingly targeted. Since his election as president, 236 people have been investigated for insulting Erdoğan, with 105 indicated and 8 formally arrested. Those targeted for “insulting the head of state” include journalists, artists, protestors, even a 16-year old high school student facing four years in prison if convicted and a former Miss Turkey for posting a poem to Instagram, indicating the individuals and lawyers filing cases on behalf of Erdoğan are willing to go after anyone in society who dares to speak insultingly, regardless of their position in society (Lowen).

Also related to freedom of speech issues is the government’s targeting of online speech through social media mediums. Due to their role in the Erdoğan’s corruption allegations and the 2013 Gezi Park protests, the government shut down access to YouTube and Twitter at different points in 2014 (Freedom in the World: Turkey). The Gezi Park Protests which occurred in the summer of 2013 had an international profile due to its size, duration, and general existence as an unusual Turkish experience. The protests began in Istanbul as a very small protest against an urban development plan in the popular Gezi Park, but grew after incidences of reported police violence. The protests grew quickly (thanks in part to social media), though very few media outlets reported on their existence despite the impossible to ignore mass gathering in an incredibly popular, busy area of the city. The protests continued to grow in size and spread to cities across Turkey, losing their meaning as a simple protest against urban development and instead “became a country-wide uprising against “the oppressive, arrogant and increasingly authoritarian” Erdoğan (Öncü 151). The EU noted in their 2013 Progress Report on Turkey that “attempts to reach out to protestors were limited and overshadowed by excessive use of force by the police, polarizing language and an overall absence of dialogue” (2). The protests illustrated the significant portion of the population who are distrusting of the AKP and Erdoğan and the current changes occurring in Turkey. The protests are also significant because while smaller protests are not necessarily unusual, the extent of protests that began at Gezi (with smaller, yet similar protests over various occurrences since) is new and demonstrative of an increasingly politically vocal population.

Such a change in political behavior as demonstrated by the size and strength of the Gezi protests is indicative of those individuals' concern; a true fear that the direction of the country is moving away from modernity under the leadership of Erdoğan. Public opinion polling confirms individuals with higher education levels are more likely to be unsatisfied with Erdoğan and more supportive of the Gezi Park protests ("Turks Divided," Sonnenschein and Srinivasan). If a democratic acknowledgement of their voices is ignored, then protesting is a way to draw attention to their viewpoint, and not only within Turkey, but with the EU and the world as an audience. The AKP's response to the protests was through police violence and a lack of dialogue, a brushing off of the protesters as criminals. This is not a response compatible with modernity.

The cause of protests in early 2015 in Turkey stem from the murder of a young woman, which is indicative of the larger concern over the treatment of women in society. As Kaya points out; "Recently women have been exposed to extremes of violence – harassed, kicked out of the work-place and even killed" (I. Kaya 206). Compounding and potentially contributing to the increase in violence against women lately, is that penalties for men who these types of crimes are typically mild (Khazan). Kaya sees this situation as a component of an environment of "de-modernization, a reversal of the modernization process" (I. Kaya 205). While this issue may not be directly caused by the AKP, it is generally accepted that the last decade under the AKP rule has seen an increase in violence against women. Though not definitively related to specific AKP changes, but rather the general increasingly conservative atmosphere that has reinforced the idea of women as second class citizens. This atmosphere is worrisome when considering its implications for modernity; such a change proves that the AKP has failed to balance its conservative leanings with its support for democracy, a step in the wrong direction towards modernity. As long as these events seen as unmodern continue to occur and many understand that the AKP and Erdoğan have contributed to this "de-modernization," social unrest will continue.

Chapter 3: Conclusion: Where is Turkish Modernity Today?

Turkey has been considered a democracy for many years, though those familiar of its political situation will recognize that this comes with caveats. Both Kemalism and the AKP have promoted their belief in full democracy for Turkey, but as Glyptis points out; “Democratisation, however, is a tricky concept. For some in Turkey, ‘more democracy generally means more Islam’, yet for others, more Islam automatically means less democracy” (“Kemalism” 243). This helps to explain why the Kemalist conception of modernity falls behind in the technical category of democracy, and why the AKP needed the EU to try and alter the state structures that restricted democracy that failed to comply with Kemalist modernity. Highlighted in this way, the concept of democracy in Turkey cannot be considered without understanding the implications of modernity. In fact, Turkish modernity does not just have effects on democracy, but essentially all political concepts and actions in Turkey. This special connection to the idea of modernity goes beyond the realm of politics and permeates Turkish society, its meaning invoking deeply held beliefs about the Turkish state and its history and traditions. Turkey’s problematic relationship with modernity and democracy, understood through battles for political control, also explains why Turkey has failed to achieve this elusive goal.

As has been explored, Kemalism represented modernization through Westernization, which required a complete rethinking of what Turkish society meant. Atatürk was the architect of this vision, and his strict belief in nationalism and secularism were the foundations for a modern, civilized society. Atatürk’s plans, however, have yet to realize their natural progression, which had led to a kind of modernity crisis in Turkey. After decades of following the Kemalist formula, Turkish society was still fragmented and in conflict, with an interfering military struggling to maintain order in the face of perceived threats, both external and internal. The internal struggles against Kurdish nationalism and Islamists led to a Kemalist elite, made up of the military, judiciary, politicians and bureaucracy, which was willing to restrict and limit freedoms in the name of protecting Kemalism. But this is indicative of

the power of Kemalism, for those who believe in its necessity for Turkey, it is a deep, passionate belief, and any straying from the principles of secularism and nationalism is a threat to modernity.

However, Kemalism had several very clear flaws, and it was these flaws that led Turkish society to where it is today. Firstly, Kemalist modernization was not a naturally occurring event, and “in cases of elite-directed transformation...it is the state elites who have to be defeated in order for modernization-from-above to be transcended by a full project of modernity” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 46). Turkey could never fully achieve modernity under Kemalism, especially after the beginning of the military coups. At this point Atatürk’s modernization project was abandoned, and Kemalist modernity transformed into an idea which could be utilized for political control. Kemalism was then promoted through this altered form, and these elites then began protecting the Kemalist ideology that maintained the status quo and alienated significant portions of the population, rather than risk the growth that would be the only way to fully achieve modernity. After many decades of promises of a modern Turkey without a full realization of this goal, other options became more appealing in hopes that Turkey could finally be delivered to this dream. The AKP offered a new voice, and a new conception of modernity that revolved around the EU, the very pinnacle of modernity that would finally achieve the state Atatürk had dreamed of.

The AKP’s vision of modernity offered a reinterpretation of secularism that was founded on democracy and human rights. The promotion of the EU by the AKP and a great push for economic reforms were seen as a fresh path to Turkish modernity, and this new dream was incredibly popular. But the AKP’s religious connection is clear break from the modernity imagined by Kemalism, but the AKP maintains that modernity and Islamic traditions and values are not only compatible, but necessary for the best interests of state and society. In essence, the AKP created an alternative modernity to the previously accepted model offered by Kemalism, but as Dönmez makes clear, “these ‘alternative modernities’ cannot be reconciled with each other” (371). The AKP offered Turkey a new definition of

modernity, one that allows Islam to be a part of government and daily life while still promoting “Western” goals of neoliberalism and democracy while working towards the beacon of European modernity; the EU.

The AKP recognized a winning formula to satisfy those who wanted religion, those who were discontent with Kemalism’s authoritarianism, and those wanting Turkey to be closer to the West and combined these typically different voters into a single powerful voting block that had been absent in Turkey for many years. In the beginning of the AKP’s tenure, the party was very effective at promoting itself as the carrier of Turkey’s new modernity, and its initial progress was promising; “under the mantle of EU-stipulated reform, the AKP has managed to effect sweeping reforms that no other government – especially suspected of harboring an Islamist agenda – could have passed” (Glyptis, “Kemalism” 222). In fact, the AKP made their new modernity very popular very quickly, and despite some initial flaws, the party with its strong leader Erdoğan developed a convincing notion of modernity that made many believe they would finally be the ones to deliver the country to goal. Important to recognize is that the AKP is a skilled political machine and its marketing was key in its success; “By carefully picking his political initiatives, as well as the words he used to describe them, Erdogan managed to suggest that everything he does... is impeccably modern” (Danforth).

But after examining the entire progression of the AKP up until this point, there are concerns surrounding the current status of the party’s modernity. To understand the change in the AKP’s modernity prerogatives, it is helpful to remember that when the AKP came to power it was working within a Kemalist state structure. Tombuş has a helpful model for understanding the AKP’s operations as a party working within a structure designed to hinder it. Tombuş identifies that the AKP had two phases, the first was during its early years when it was first establishing power and removing obstacles to democratization. The second phase began when the AKP had solidified its power and could finally act

on creating the institutional conditions for democracy, or it could use those some institutions “to establish its own undemocratic control” (321). He argues that the AKP has chosen the second option.

The initial phase of democratization was when the AKP was working against the Kemalist structure and for the democratic and human rights ideals it professed, following EU reforms in the name of its new modernity. After the AKP successfully removed the obstacles to democratization, it had the opportunity to further these reforms and truly open up Turkey to full liberal democracy. However, instead of following this path, “The AKP has started to replace the Kemalist authoritarianism with a conservative authoritarianism by using the very same state apparatuses it took over from the Kemalist establishment” (Tombuş 314). The Kemalist ideology that made secularism a foundation of its modernity was soon replaced by a new vision, one in which “the AKP has its own authoritative impulses for its project of a more conservative Turkey... [where] Islam constitutes the main building block” (Tombuş 324). The status of the AKP’s current modernity is different than the conception is promoted in its early years. Its promotion of a true democracy has fallen through, and its actions have proven that the Turkish political system is distorted. In order for one party to gain power over the embedded Kemalist system, it had to promote that it was wanting to change that system. But instead of truly replacing the old system, it rather exchanged one system of elites with an empowering structure for another. This demonstrates a clear use of a modernity as a political tool, proving that when used for political gain, rather than a serious goal, modernity cannot be achieved.

The biggest issue concerning the AKP’s modernity, which can be found in both its initial and later conceptions, is the presence of religious conservatism with Islam as the “main building block.” Because the presence of Islam is antithetical to Kemalism’s secularism, this constitutes the biggest issue surrounding the AKP’s conception of modernity. This issue cannot be reconciled by Kemalists, and it is conservatism that has worked to deepen Turkey’s societal divide and is responsible for the social unrest. Kaya believes that the Turkey of recent created by the AKP and Erdoğan illustrates that “the Islamic

outlook is not modern" (I. Kaya 198). Possibly a controversial theory, within the Turkish experience, his reasoning rings true; "Islamic actors have no problem with economic and technological developments, whereas they have serious problems with the cultural and political characteristics of modernity" (198, 199). The Kemalist modernity is the foundation of Turkish modernity, and its implications were economic and technological, with political features necessary to implement all features of modernity. Though for Atatürk, its cultural characteristics were the most important in the journey to achieving modernity. Without altering Turkey's acceptable culture, Atatürk knew that Turkey could never reach modernity. So though the AKP has followed economic modernity manifested through its belief in capitalism, its connection with Islamic conservatism impedes "cultural and political modernity" (I. Kaya 199). The impediments of Islamic conservatism that keep it from being an interpretation of modernity are that it struggles to realize necessary components of basic modernity such as gender equality (208). Modernity cannot be modernity without full recognition of the necessary "modern" cultural recognitions.

Along with its issues surrounding cultural modernity, the AKP's moves away from democracy, the main concept it had based its modernity foundation on manifested through the EU, prove that its previous conception of modernity can no longer be proved true. Without genuine prospects for Turkey joining the EU at this time and the AKP's diminished EU focus, their conception of a capitalist, democratic modernity that respected human rights is shattered. The AKP may still believe and market capitalism as their modernity, and that may be right, but "Modernity cannot be reduced to economic forces, because without political modernity, modernity itself could in no way emerge" (I. Kaya 204). Though the AKP has been democratically elected, democracy "has been reduced to the ballot box by the current government." The AKP initiates and passes laws and decisions with their majority in Parliament, not finding it necessary to try and make broader coalitions of support (I. Kaya 205). Even the EU notes that the political climate "lacks a spirit of compromise," and even on "socially sensitive issues" there

lacks “sufficient consultation and dialogue with stakeholders” before the AKP passes single-party decisions (EU Commission 2013).

The authoritarian tendencies of Erdoğan and the failure of the AKP to attempt wider political cohesion show a general lack of concern for increased democracy, despite that being a foundation of the modernity they claimed they would bring to Turkey. In fact, Turkey has received downward ratings for both 2014 and 2015 for democratic standards in the Freedom in the World ratings. The organization summed the 2014 acts of Prime Minister and then President Erdoğan as follows:

“Erdoğan consolidated power during the year and waged an increasingly aggressive campaign against democratic pluralism. He openly demanded that media owners censor coverage or fire critical journalists, told the Constitutional Court he does not respect its rulings, threatened reporters (and rebuked women journalists) and ordered radical, even bizarre changes to the school curriculum” (Freedom in the World 2015)

This does not sound like someone concerned with their democratic appeal. As leader of the AKP, the party is still closely associated with Erdoğan and now many see that “The AKP has come to embody the very flaws of Turkish politics that it had once pledged to eliminate: cronyism, repression of freedoms, and disregard for the rule of law” (Sadar).

And while the EU has a much more secondary role in Turkish politics than it did when the AKP first came to power, their role in solidifying the AKP’s power cannot be ignored. There is no denying that EU reforms helped to empower the AKP by negating the structural advantages provided to Kemalists. And though opinions may be different at the moment, in the past the EU has supported the AKP, as the EU would naturally endorse a party that seemed willing to commit to EU reforms. However, with the journey the AKP has taken and the passionate feelings that surround the party, the EU has been seen as taking sides, and certainly, for many who support[ed] the EU, the wrong side. In this initial support for the AKP, it is also clear that the EU failed to provide a clear and credible membership plan for Turkey, further alienating Kemalists and providing little reason for the AKP to make serious reforms.

It has, like Kemalists and the AKP, failed to deliver Turkey to modernity. As a result, the role of the EU since the introduction of the AKP has been to contribute to the polarization of Turkish politics and society, as well as “to widen and deepen the conflict between the AKP and its opponents” (Kalaycıoğlu 277).

Glyptis posed an interesting question while reflecting on EU demands and the domestic concerns surrounding them: “Could EU accession, rather than being the vindication of Atatürk’s modernization, actually be its undoing?” (“Kemalism” 236). This is a serious question, because the EU accession process has led to deep divides in Turkish society, not to mention that at the end of 2014 only a mere 18% of Turks responded that they “tend to trust” the EU (Eurobarometer). Not only has Turkey been humiliated by the words and actions of the EU and EU member states, but its role in the support and power consolidation by the AKP will be hard for many to look past. And while the AKP maintains that it is still interested in EU accession, its actions hardly reflect a serious commitment. Turkey is completely in limbo surrounding EU membership, and it seems clear that membership is not a close prospect in the near future. Meanwhile, the processes and reforms made in the name of the EU have led to the purge of Kemalists from many sectors of government and the military. The current AKP definition of modernity is far from Atatürk’s definition, and though many have a deep religious-like belief in Kemalism, the structural advantages formed by this group are now gone. And not only are they gone, they have been replaced in many areas by those loyal to the AKP. The EU is not to blame for this, but its role in strengthening the AKP is undeniable.

Through tracing the AKP’s modernity path, it is clear that there is a debate concerning the relationship between the AKP and the EU. For some, the AKP truly wanted Turkey to join the EU initially, but it was a result of the EU’s actions that the AKP stepped back from reforms. For others, it seems clear that the AKP was “using the EU accession process as a tactical move without really believing in it” (I. Yılmaz). Disregarding the last few years of questionable democratic moves from the AKP, and taking

into account that the future of the AKP could still contain a revived meaningful push for EU membership, it could be argued that removing the Kemalist structure hindering democracy is still a good thing. But Glyptis makes the important point that means are just as important as the end, and that the whole of Erdoğan's EU agenda should be considered;

“Rather than merely reforming internal politics in order to reach the external goal of EU membership, he is using EU membership to mold internal politics, to “democratize” the polity in a non-Kemalist fashion. One could argue that the net result is the same and the difference is too subtle to matter and yet intentions, perceptions and aims do matter” (“Rapprochement” 413).

The acknowledgement of the AKP's questionable intentions and the concerned perceptions of the public about its EU reforms is important, and can be related to the polarization in Turkish society and politics that the AKP has contributed to.

There is something to be said about the political opportunism potentially used by the AKP in reference to the EU. With the ability of reflection, it is possible to question the motives of the AKP in their work with EU reforms. These suspicions were raised early on, but weren't exceedingly widespread, especially after the first few years of successful EU-oriented reform. Many scholars addressing the AKP in its early years were very hopeful and impressed, though within Turkey some within Kemalist circles addressed their concern surrounding the sincerity of the AKP's actions. Today though, through examining the reforms the AKP chose to tackle versus those it did not combined with the present status of EU-Turkish relationship does create an interesting account regardless of the fact that such suspicions cannot be proved true. Using outside tools for domestic political power is not a phenomena unique to Turkey, and neither is use of the EU in such a way. Such concerns are only important to remember and address, in that such beliefs are a part of the political narrative surrounding the AKP.

Also an essential component of the AKP's narrative has been the role of Islam, as the AKP's tenure has certainly seen an “Islamization” of Turkish politics and society (Göle and Tongdong). But the

AKP has not necessarily led to an Islamic resurgence, it has only made its presence more visible. The AKP has normalized, in some segments of society, the need and desire for Islam to be a part of politics. This development allows more conservative Muslims a more welcome place in society. Secularists openly ridicule Islamists in the spirit of their 'backward and traditional' ways. The polarizations between these two populations is very real and runs deep through society. The middle ground of modern Muslims have also favored the AKP, but as things continue to change, it is possible some will be swayed away from the authoritarian Erdoğan and his party. But the appeal of the AKP still remains for many; those who do not believe that religion must be relegated purely to the private sphere but still wish to participate in other modern experiences still follow their message, and this population has been served well by the AKP. The Kemalist experience of modernity is about control of Islam, and firm secularists have contributed to this problem by a general attitude of intolerance for religion that can be felt in society, politics, and the media. Kemalists conception of modernity includes strict secularism which simply cannot be reconciled with public religion. But the AKP's connection to democracy, EU, and the West "reflects an effort to internalize modernity without denying traditional Islamic and national values" (Dönmez 370).

Modern Muslims wanted deeply to believe in the AKP and Erdoğan, and for good reason. Promotion of the EU with their focus on democracy and human rights is exactly what many modern Muslims wanted, a leader who proved that modernity as Islam were not mutually exclusive. And though its current modernity may be separated from Western modernity ideals, the AKP has still contributed to society in an important way. The AKP's time in office has coincided with a flourishing economy, an increase in per capita income, and high levels of foreign direct investment (Aknur). With the huge success of the economy, it is hard to deny this benefit of political stability. The AKP has also improved access to social services (though through grassroots work and charities) as well as improved infrastructure. The AKP's economic success has also contributed to its ability to implement greater

modernization of rural areas, including the improvement of things like roads and hospitals. These are undeniable benefits of the AKP, and they are directly related to their electoral successes.

Given the AKP's most recent vote share in the 2011 elections and Erdoğan's subsequent earning of half of the presidential votes in 2014, it is almost as if Turkish politics has been evenly divided and is now completely polarized. Recent public opinion surveys have helped to prove the very serious divide in Turkey. In the Spring of 2014 a Pew Research Center Poll found that 51% of Turks were dissatisfied with the direction of the country and 44% were satisfied. This trend has been relatively steady since 2011, with society's opinions split down the middle. Also telling is the fact that women are slightly less satisfied with the country's direction than men and only 26% of those who hardly ever pray are satisfied, highlighting that women and more secular individuals are less happy with the current regime. Similarly, 44% of the country believes the national government is having a bad effect on the country with 51% believing it to have a good influence. Concerning Erdoğan, the poll was split evenly at 48% for each side finding him to have a good and bad influence. The highly visible and critical Gezi Park protests saw about 49% of people saying they supported the anti-government protests with a strong 40% opposing them ("Turks Divided"). These differences also give way to divides over Islam in politics, with 69% of Turks believing that Islam plays a large political role in Turkey, up from 45% believing the same in 2002 when the AKP was first elected. Of those who think it plays a large role, 47% believe this to be a good thing while 40% find it to be a bad thing ("Turks Divided"). Further evidence of the divide in society, a Turkey-based survey group MetroPOLL examined certain beliefs concerning religion and together with the Pew survey showed that piety and the main political party that Turks supported drew clear distinctions in their beliefs surrounding politics, religion, and secularism. Interestingly, the MetroPOLL found that 71% of respondents believe Turkey should be secular, with a robust 19% believing that the state should not be secular (Zibak).

The next election cycle will be the summer of 2015, and the outcome will be telling. With Erdoğan as the Turkish president, his role is solidified until at least 2019, but whether or not the AKP will continue its electoral reign is unknown. Anger and unrest at Erdoğan and the AKP has grown steadily and remains heated only months before the next national elections. But the power and support of the AKP remains strong, and it is yet to be seen if societal discontent by a large, vocal portion of the population has grown strong enough to affect their solid voting bloc. By this point, the AKP will have a difficult time selling its previous version of modernity, and likely equally as difficult of time marketing itself as reformers concerned with the EU (though they still maintain that full EU membership is a “strategic goal” of the party) (*AKParti*).

For some voters who previously supported the AKP, it is clear that the party has taken a turn that they can no longer support. Mustafa Akyol, a contributor for the International New York Times and regular columnist in several other publications including the *Hurriyet Daily News* where he recently shared his story; “Confessions of a Recovering ‘Erdoğan Enabler.’” He discusses that he does not regret his past support for the party, claiming that during the party’s early years, “anybody who wanted to see a more liberal and democratic Turkey could easily see light in the AKP rather than its political rivals.” He discusses their support for minority rights, freedom of speech, free markets, and the EU, stating that “The fact that these liberal causes were championed by a party of conservative Muslims made me only even more enthusiastic.” However, he acknowledges that power corrupted the AKP, and that the EU reforms were adopted for “pragmatic reasons – such as saving his rule from the wrath of secularist generals.” He finishes that today he is disappointed by how the AKP has turned out, though poignantly clarifying; “But unlike the hard-core secularists in Turkey... I never had a problem with who they were. Rather, I looked at what they did. And as what they did changed over time, so did my views.”

Aykol is an example of a moderate (or conservative) Muslim who saw no problem with the AKP’s religiosity and Islamist influence in government. He acknowledges, however, that he can no longer

support the AKP, not withdrawing support based the religious/secular divide, but on the principle that the AKP is not who they said were. Turkey's relationship with the EU, democracy, and freedom of speech have greatly suffered under recent AKP rule, and this will certainly affect the party's vote share, though it is to be seen if the extent will be major or minor. Nonetheless, the AKP and "an ever more authoritarian Erdoğan has managed to maintain the support of his religiously conservative based while increasingly emphasizing piety over democracy" (Danforth). And so for some voters, given the AKP's past actions and statements, the neglect of democracy might not matter to those who have benefited from the AKP or those who feel strongly that Erdoğan is not an authoritarian president, but a strong leader who is guiding Turkey down a path of morals and recognizing a different historical mandate than the previous model provided by Kemalism that simply failed to deliver.

For those still unhappy about the tenure of the AKP, their concerns about Turkish society boil down to the question of modernity. For Kemalists, modernity and secularism must go together, there is no exception to this rule. For the AKP, Turkey can be both modern and Muslim. These two visions of modernity, along with their debates about the military, minorities, and the EU have created a tense domestic environment. For those believing in the foundation of Kemalist modernity that Turkey was founded on cannot reconcile the AKP's actions and presence. There is a true fear that Turkey's progress towards modernity will be pulled back, leaving a state that may have a free market economy, but with a society that is socially repressive and completely incompatible with the European social model that Atatürk planned for his country. For Kemalists, the result of 12 years of AKP rule is the embodiment of all the anxieties Atatürk warned Turkey needed to be protected from. On the other hand, religious individuals who find the AKP's message of Islamic guiding morals to be the only modernity compatible with their way of life. It is truly of a tale of two very different Turkeys.

Kemalist modernity does not allow for exclusions or exceptions. It perceived modernity as a linear journey, and the AKP has created a serious rupture along this path. Secularization was an

essential component to modernity, in Atatürk's view, it was the largest barrier to Turkey's modern future. The AKP presented itself as a party committed to the secular regime, but its rule has created a society that where Islam's importance is elevated, and has become much more socially conservative. This society has strayed from Atatürk's conception of modernity due to the AKP's negation of some of Turkey's most important secular elements. However, the hegemony of the AKP has ushered in this new society, and many of their supporters feel this new reality better fits their religious profiles. Kemalism's grasp has slipped and these religiously conservative citizens now have more power, and they recognize this control and will be unlikely to relinquish it. This change has been startling for Turkey's secular middle class, including those who may not have considered themselves strict Kemalists previously.

The AKP promoted itself as a new conception of Turkish modernity; one that respected democracy and human rights through Turkey's membership in the EU. The AKP brought Turkey closer to this goal, but the steam behind these reforms gave out, and many believed that the old Turkish politics had returned. But even this conception was incorrect. The AKP was not offering a return to former Turkish politics. The AKP, during which time it completed many democratic reforms hoping to meet the EU requirements and deliver Turkey to the cusp of modernity, was actually creating a new modus operandi in Turkish politics. No doubt adopting the EU reforms was a political move, but it cannot be determined that the AKP was disingenuous in its initial push for reforms. However, through examining the AKP's specific reforms and actions, it seemingly highlights a much different party than the Western oriented party it claimed to be. Its definition of modernity began to clash with the Kemalist definition of modernity that Turkish society had come to expect, and the AKP's EU reforms started making serious changes to the Kemalist establishment.

Kemalism may have been subdued and its presence in government neglected, but its ideology is not dead. Though the military has lost its ability to step in and restore this Kemalist vision, the dream of Kemalist secularism and modernity is still alive and very much sought after by a still significant portion of

the population. The new power in Turkey has made quick work to fundamentally change the system, utilizing the same mentality and tools as Atatürk did when he first introduced his project;

“whether by rational overlords or by religious tyrants, who seem to be resourceful enough to emulate the ways of modern political control for their own brand of despotism, modernity appears to be a key factor” (Polat 652).

Modernity is an incredibly powerful political tool in Turkey. It has had unparalleled success at maintaining the Kemalist dream, and its potential was recognized by others looking to upend the status quo. And so Turkish modernity was adapted from Kemalism and then used against it. The AKP’s new modernity offered Turkey something new, and in its name the Kemalist structure has been chipped away. But instead of completing a new vision, offering Turkey full liberal democracy for the first time, the AKP used its tool to cement itself in power.

The general air of societal distrust and intolerance generating by the changes made under AKP rule, however, would not be possible without the general flaws in both the AKP and Kemalist versions of modernity. Kemalism, with its authoritarian, ethnically homogenous and strictly secular viewpoint of Turkish modernity failed to allow for exceptions or leniency and so its implementation failed to stand with time. Instead of delivering Turkey to modernity, the Kemalist elite preferred to keep Turkey “safe,” and its institutions alienated liberals and conservative Muslims alike. But the AKP has equal flaws. Its failure to balance its conservatism with democracy has led to the authoritarian tendencies it claimed to be fighting against. It has seemingly stopped reaching for the goal of EU membership and its cultural policies tend to demonstrate a reversal of modernization.

This overview of Kemalism and the AKP, the two most popular and important benefactors of Turkish modernity prove that there has been no true political project based on modernization or democratization in Turkey. Both parties offered modernity that they utilized as a political tool, rather than a genuine goal for the country. When used in this way, modernity cannot be achieved, because

true modernity and full democracy cannot ensure continued political power, and both the AKP and Kemalism have been unwilling to relinquish this position of power. Understanding these complexities of Turkish domestic politics, the EU has failed to improve the situation of modernity, and has in fact worsened the political and social polarizations deeply affecting the country. The EU failure to provide a clear, credible path to membership for Turkey has also proven itself incapable of delivering modernity.

Whether the AKP retains its 50 percent vote share and remains in power after the 2015 national elections will be telling about which modernity Turkish citizens are looking for, but currently it is unclear. True modernity and democracy must be a naturally occurring process from the ground level, and recent moves such as the Gezi Park protests and the women's movement are steps in this direction. Things are currently changing in Turkey, and with the Kemalist structure removed, the elections in June will be indicative about what next moves are possible. Still at the present moment, the great Turkish modernity debate is still raging, and the biggest loser is democracy.

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